

BINGANG



1903

1977

THE CLUB CROSBY
PRESENTS
A MEMORIAL ISSUE OF BINGANG

Dedicated to the Memory of our Honorary President and Friend

B I N G C R O S B Y

1903 - 1977

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FRONT COVER: JOE SINNOTT

REAR COVER: Lou Grant cartoon reprinted from October 16th
OAKLAND TRIBUNE

B I N G A N G

BING CROSBY 1903-1977

Bing Crosby died October 14, 1977 at the age of 73 years, 5 months. It was sudden and without warning. He could not have known what happened, but if he had it is certain he would have handled it properly--exactly as we hope we will do when our turn comes. For while he was as successful as anyone who ever lived, we sensed a deeper truth in him. Unlike most world figures, he seemed more like you and me. His qualities made sense to us, so did his mistakes. An observer could not help noticing, up there on the stage or screen, one's very own self, manifest before the whole world. Always he appeared to do just the right things. When he sang, when he performed, he was Everyman. Not perfect or flawless, thank God, but correct all the same. Satisfying, he was. Human.

But if Bing departed this world happily unaware of how he did it, the rest of us were not so fortunate. We must remain behind, mourning his loss. The best example of ourselves has flown away. Who will take his place? Can we ever find another who will tell it so correctly. So comfortably and so beautifully?

His music will go on, of course, as long as we want it to do so. As for the rest--the best part, really--we can only say, we will take it from here, Bing.

Because we must.

Vernon Wesley Taylor
Portland, Oregon
October 15, 1977

So tired, but it's the old Bing . . .

BING CROSBY breezed into Brighton yesterday. But if you were not among the thousands who packed into the Brighton Centre for his one - night show, your chances of spotting the Old Groaner were slim.

He arrived late yesterday afternoon and went straight up to the centre's executive suite — and stayed there, resting, until the start of the show.

"He was quite shattered after his tour of the North and two weeks at the London Palladium," said tour organiser Mr Harry McBride.

But there were no signs of exhaustion during the three - hour concert; he was on stage throughout the second half.

Effortlessly and easily he crooned his way through song after song, from the modern *The Way We Were* back to *True Love, Blue Skies*, and even a rather premature *White Christmas*. And it ended with a standing ovation.

During the 20 - minute interval Bing posed for pictures backstage with another veteran, Gracie Fields, who is in this country doing television work and had come to Brighton specially for the show.

Friends

"We're old friends," said Gracie. "We used to appear as guests in each other's radio shows years and years ago."

Bing also found time to meet the Mayor of Brighton, Coun. Mrs Hilary Somerville, and other civic representatives.

Last word from Coun. Alfred Feld, chairman of Brighton Amenities Committee. He said the Centre, described by Bing during his show as "this beautiful auditorium," had now proved it could provide top - class entertainment.

"The show was a sell - out," he said. "It broke all records and should bring a handsome profit."



THE LIGHTS went down and there he was. Bing gave the audience of 5,000 a cross section of his hits spanning 40 years at the top of the tree.

THE ARGUS

**Story by
Phil Rich**

**Pictures
by Jerry
Casswell**

WELL, well, fancy seeing you—Gracie Fields, in this country for television work, went backstage and gave her old pal Bing his biggest surprise of the evening.

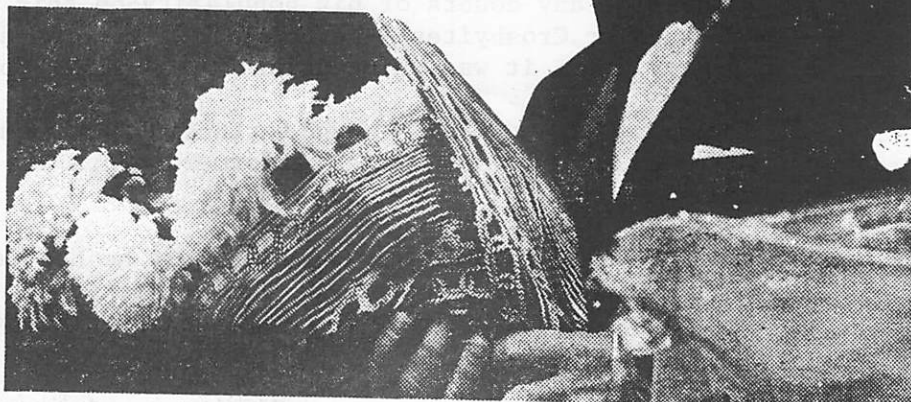


In memory of Bing . . .

WOULD IT be possible for the new Brighton Centre to be renamed The Bing Crosby Memorial Centre in honour of the great performance he gave, to a full house, only four days before he died.

This should not be very difficult for his initials are already there, as Ted Rogers pointed out to us all during the show. **MARGARET ATKINSON**, New Road, Brighton.

HIS FINAL CONCERT: Bing smiles with appreciation as he holds bouquet presented to him on his last stage appearance — in Brighton, England, four days before his death.



As a youngster in the early thirties, music, to my generation was pretty limited---radio was in the early stages, we had the cinema and the advent of the musical, and of course the local dance halls.

A friend of mine possessed an old hand-wound gramophone and a few of the early Crosby recordings. We used to listen to them over and over. This was the start of my appreciation of Bing. I also developed a strong right arm---it was an appreciation that was to stay with me until the present.

I served in the army for the duration of the war and here again derived many hours of pleasure listening to Bing on a small portable gramophone belonging to my unit. With the end of the war things slowly began to improve, Crosby records became available in the local music shops, and I commenced to build up my collection of 78's. Of course we had the 'Road' films and it was possible to listen to Bing's shows through the A.F.N. broadcasts on the Continent. I can't begin to count the hours of pleasure obtained over the years.

You can understand my feelings on reading that Bing was to appear in a concert at Belle Vue in Manchester. I believe I posted my application for tickets within an hour of the date's being announced. An ambition was about to be realised---then came the news of Bing's fall from the stage and the possibility due to a back injury that the tour would be cancelled. Fortunately the trouble cleared and the show was on. Belle Vue the venue of the one night stand is situated fairly central in Manchester and is a focal point for various entertainments in the north of England. King's Hall which was the actual site chosen normally houses circus and other spectacular but can be adapted for concerts and such.

My wife and I took our seats well in advance of the concert beginning---it was not a sell out due to the doubt that still existed about whether Bing would be able to make it. But the three thousand that came to see and enjoy were true Crosby enthusiasts. They fully intended to give Bing a welcome he would never forget.

Bing started off well with a couple of his more recent hits and told us What Life Was All About and how there was Nothing He Had Not Sung About. Ted Rogers, a London born comedian, gagged awhile and was joined by Bing in a rendering of an old favourite 'Gone Fishin'. One highlight of the show was a Noel Coward medley in which the entire cast took part, truly an inspired choice for a British tour. Rosemary Clooney was up to her usual high standard. She was followed by Bing in a happy mood. He was ably assisted by Kathryn and Harry, Jr. But, this was above all Bing's night. This was what it was all about, and we were not to be disappointed. This man sang better as the show progressed and the climax was reached when supported by the Joe Bushkin Quartet he swung into a medley of the old favourites---this was Bing as we knew him, ad-libbing and gagging with the band and the audience. They in turn rose to the occasion and I am sure dispelled any doubts of his popularity on this night of nights for the Manchester Crosbyites---he could have gone on all night. I can say that for my part, it was an occasion I will never forget.

Looking back, we were indeed fortunate to have had the privilege of seeing and hearing this fantastic performer before his untimely death a few weeks later---the end of an era for many.

We must be thankful for the fact that he has left so much of himself behind for us to enjoy over the coming years, and console ourselves with the knowledge that Bing made his final exit in a way he would have preferred.

BING CROSBY'S LAST INTERVIEW IN LONDON

by Peter Green

I joined the vast audience at the London Palladium as hundreds of fans leapt to their feet frenetically acclaiming one of the all-time greats of showbiz ...Bing Crosby.

It was his closing night on October 8, 1977 after his second dynamically successful season at the famous West End theatre in little more than a year. It was an incredible, heart-warming spectacle as Bing stood on stage visibly affected by this great, spontaneous demonstration of love. You could sense a united wave of affection stream from the audience and engulf Bing.

It reaffirmed what most of us knew...that the British regarded Bing as their very own! Though no doubt many of his stalwart American fans would contest that notion.

But for his part Bing made no secret of his rollicking love affair with Britain. I decided to call him to request the favor of an interview to let his adoring fans know what he thought of them. Typically, the idea appealed to him. He invited me to his plush apartment in London's elegant Mayfair.

It was 5:20 p.m. on Wednesday, October 12. How could I know, as Bing cheerily waved me into a chair by him, that I was having what would prove to be the great man's last interview. He had already seen Kathryn off earlier in the day. She would never see him alive again. In less than 48 hours from the time I was ushered into his presence Bing would be dead in Madrid, Spain.

Over a cup of tea Bing was soon talking animatedly about one of his favorite subjects, his British fans. "When you talk about the fans, then it's more important in Britain than anywhere else."

I confessed surprise. How could the greatest singer-actor of all time feel more wanted in a foreign country? But Bing insisted the real warmth and affection was to be found in Britain and not in the States. He didn't put it that baldly because he was naturally anxious not to impugn his "very loyal" American fans who did such a great deal for his career.

"But it's a different kind of relationship in Britain," Bing said with that lazy smile that has enchanted audiences for more than 50 star-spangled years.

"I think the British like me, not so much for what I do, but for just being a plain, ordinary guy. I have known for years how very loyal they are to anybody that has entertained them. This goes back to the old music hall days before the war when any artist could play the same act year after year, never change, yet still be adored by the fans. It's a lasting quality.

"Well-loved entertainers in Britain are never regarded as being passe. The English never give up on any of their old favourites."

Those fans made sure Bing's two Palladium concerts were outstanding and memorable successes.

"It was standing room only," he whistled. "I just can't get over it. It was the same when I did the show at Brighton, Manchester and Preston. I

found it hugely stimulating." He added: "Yes, the British really have a special place in my heart. I am very, very fond of them."

Bing, 73 but looking no more than a virile 60, which made his sudden passing all the more shattering, said the outstanding impression after coming to Britain regularly for a number of years (his first visit was pre-war) was the "civility of the British people."

"I like the country because of the beautiful and varied things it has to offer...opera, theatre, racing, golf, cricket, football, museums and churches. The cathedral at York is one of the greatest in the world. And Westminster Cathedral is fantastic. Yes, London is my favorite city."

Bing had found time between other engagements to film his annual Christmas TV show. It was shot at Elstree studios, near London, with Ron Moody, Twiggy and rock star David Bowie.

"People who've had a preview say it's a very good Yuletide show," said Bing. Since his death Kathryn Crosby has said the show will be screened.

Britain's all-time favorite American had been cutting most of his records in London, and had hoped to get together with Bob Hope for another "Road to..." film. He told me: "None of us will say yes till we see a good script. But it looks promising. And the shooting will be in England."

The last in the famous series, "Road to Hong Kong," was filmed at Shepperton Studios in 1961. I joined Bing and Bob on that set for their first day's shooting, and what a memorable occasion it was. I took dozens of pictures of Bing as he went into the opening song-and-dance routine with Bob.

But his hopes of another "Road" epic were not to be realized. Fate was to decree otherwise. Less than 48 hours after these comments he had played his last hole...and lay dead.

Bing had added: "Doing the Palladium was just great. I did it twice specially for my British supporters. But maybe that's enough. I certainly don't aim to wear out my welcome in your country. Where could I go?"

Of course, there was no chance of his fans over here ever losing interest in their idol. Those I spoke to during his two Palladium seasons said they could never get enough of the great man. The excitement and nostalgia Bing generated was unbelievable.

One man showed me two crumpled, treasured letters he had from Bing in 1938 and 1939, but bemoaning the fact that, apart from seeing him on the Palladium stage, had never had a clue how to meet him personally.

When I told him, not boastingly I hope, that I had had the privilege of meeting Bing several times in Britain and America, having paid a memorable visit to his lovely Hillsborough home in 1970, he gasped and said, "Let me shake your hand!"

I wrote this story on the day Bing died on a Madrid golf course. Now I feel so honoured to know that I was the last to interview him. On reflection I have the oddest sensation that perhaps he knew he was living on

borrowed time and that this was his last opportunity to express his deep, sincere gratitude to his wonderful fans.

I feel privileged and humble to realize that it was I and nobody else who recorded for posterity the direct speech you have read in this report. Could there be a more appropriate requiem for the man?

* * * * *

Crosby's British Fans To Set Up Scholarships

By SEYMOUR
FREIDIN

News American Bureau

LONDON — British music scholarships in the name of Bing Crosby and a probable bust or statue of him by a renowned sculptor have been planned to commemorate his work.

Crosby was dearly beloved in Britain by all age groups and every section of society. He was an honored guest at Buckingham Palace and in buildings for have-not kids.

Because Bing — as he always was called in England — never mentioned it, the fact is that he gave away millions to assist the underprivileged.

Many swimming pools, recreation centers and music rooms were made possible by his contributions. His last tour, packed by audiences and resoundingly successful, didn't bring Crosby a penny. He gave it all away in Britain.

When this reporter went to see him a few

weeks ago before the beginning of his last British tour, the question of Bing's contributions came up — briefly.

He smoothed the great blue polka-dot bowtie on his collar and replied softly: "that's what you fellows would call strictly off-the-record."

His attitude which endeared him to folks-at-large here blended into the comfortable background Bing engendered with song and entertainment for the British. That was the theme cited at the Roman Catholic cathedral of Westminster Sunday in a rare tribute to Bing's repose and the sense that he conveyed in his style.

He always worshipped at the cathedral when in London and attended mass there a fortnight ago.

At Leeds during the day, the Bing Crosby Society listened to a brief pre-recorded message he specifically addressed to the group. It crackled with a few gags, a burst of song and his thanks to

the locals.

His love of golf has always been much appreciated in Britain. So, it came as no surprise that he thought about buying a golf course in Kent, a short ride from London.

The price was around \$500,000 and Bing thought seriously about it after playing 18 holes. He'd be coming back, he said, for another concert next month and tell the principals about buying the course.

"We'd have given the course to him," remembered one of the golf group. "Look what he has done for everyone."

Bing Crosby, another old golf partner observed, "would give but never take."

In that spirit a panel of notables and young people will be giving something to perpetuate the name of Bing Crosby and his great impact on life in Britain.

DIEZ MINUTOS

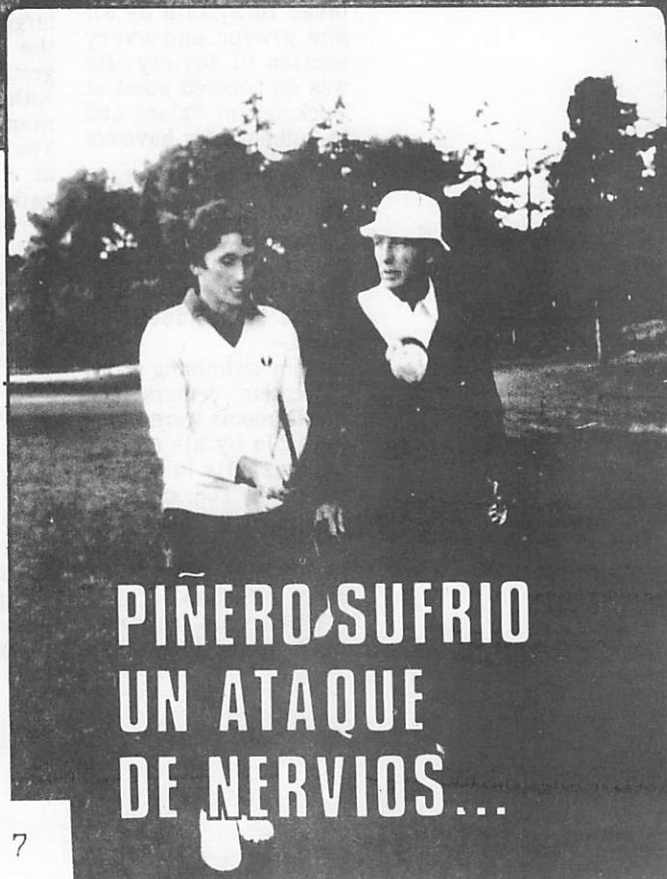
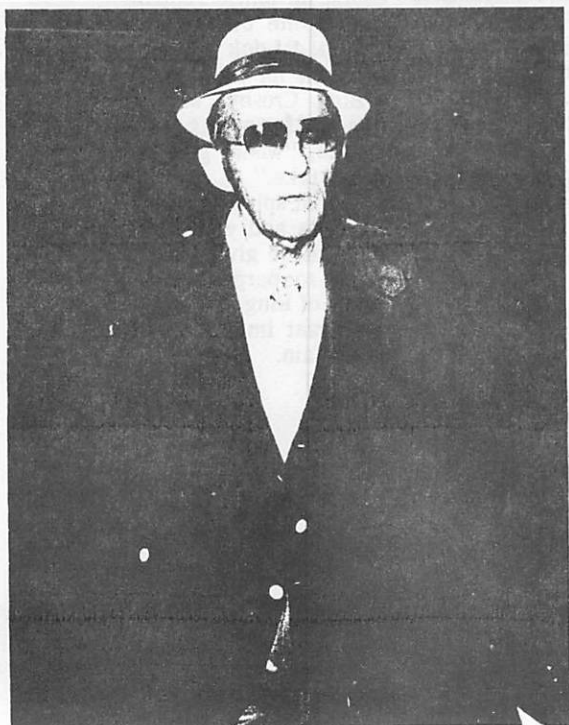
Madrid-Barcelona. 29/10/1977. Año XXVII. Núm. 1.366

GRAN EXCLUSIVA

BING CROSBY

UNICAS FOTOS DE SU PARTIDA
DE GOLF EN MADRID

45
pesetas



**PINERO SUFRIO
UN ATAQUE
DE NERVIOS...**

The Sun, Monday, Oct. 17, 1977—



● ABOVE: Bing Crosby on the 17th tee at the Moraleja Golf Club near Madrid on Friday. Bing collapsed and died soon after completing the round.



—AP Wirephoto

Bing Crosby sang in Concord, Calif., in August, his first stage appearance after he fell off a stage in March

Shock, Sorrow Over Bing 'He Was Happy and Singing'

UPI, AP, Journal Staff

Bing Crosby, who seemed one of life's indestructible assets to three generations of fans, was happy and singing and a victor on the golf course when he collapsed and died Friday at the age of 73.

Crosby was stricken on a course near Madrid, Spain, as he walked with his golfing partners back to the clubhouse. He was taken to the Madrid Red Cross hospital where he was pronounced dead on arrival, apparently from a heart attack.

The golden voiced crooner and actor whose songs sold 300 million records arrived in Spain Thursday morning for

Pictures on back page

a golfing vacation to cap a triumphant performance tour of England.

He teamed up with Spanish champion Manuel Pinero to defeat another Spanish champion, Valentin Barrios, and Moraleja golf club president

Cesar de Zulueta by one stroke.

"We had just finished the 18th hole and were walking toward the clubhouse when Bing had a seizure and fell," Barrios said. "We thought he had just slipped. He injured his head slightly when he fell."

Barrios said Crosby did not utter a sound as he fell.

"There were no last words," he said. "We were walking back to the clubhouse chatting and happy

Turn to Crosby, page 16, col. 1

Bing Left Indelible Mark on 3 Generations of Fans

Los Angeles Times, AP, UPI

that we had won. He was happy and singing as we went around the course.

"We took him into the clubhouse and he was given oxygen and cardiac tonic injections, but nothing could be done.

"Bing had shown no signs of fatigue. All of a sudden Bing dropped and remained on the ground. He was very pale. We carried him to the clubhouse, but it was already too late."

Crosby died about 6:30 p.m. (10:30 a.m. CDT) on a warm, sunny autumn day.

Son Flies to Spain

Crosby's son, Harry, flew to Madrid Saturday to work on the transfer arrangements, a US embassy spokesman said.

Funeral services will be conducted Tuesday in California. Crosby's wife, Kathryn, said Crosby probably would be buried beside his parents and his first wife in Los Angeles.

Mrs. Crosby flew home from England Wednesday night, and disclosed that earlier in the week thieves had broken into their rented London apartment and stolen about \$15,000 worth of items, including the antique gold snuff box and a cigaret case she had bought as Bing's Christmas presents this year.

Mrs. Crosby was recording at a studio in San Francisco when she received the news of her husband's death in a telephone call from the US ambassador to Spain, Wells Stabler.

Shortly before his last round of golf, Crosby was interviewed by Spanish reporters, and he said he was looking forward to teaming again with Bob Hope and Dorothy Lamour in what would have been the eighth and final of his famous "Road" pictures — "The Road To The Fountain of Youth."

Crosby said his recently completed tour of Britain, including a sellout performance at London's Palladium, was a test of his recovery from a back injury suffered earlier this year in a fall from a theater stage in Pasadena, Calif. That show had marked his 50th year in show business.

One of a family of seven children, Crosby had seven children himself — four by his first wife, Dixie Lee, who died of cancer in 1952 after a marriage of 22 years, and three by Kathryn Grant, who was 29 years younger than Bing when they wed in 1957.

There was a kind of delayed reaction Friday to the news of Bing Crosby's death in Spain. No one seemed able to believe it for a time.

There had been earlier rumors of his death in recent years, and usually they had to be denied by a Crosby family spokesman roused from sleep.

It happened as recently as early this year, while Crosby was hospitalized for a back injury suffered when he fell from a stage during taping of his 50th anniversary TV show.

Statement by Widow

But Friday it was not a hoax.

Bob Crosby, the singer's bandleader brother, was eating a sandwich in a delicatessen in Orlando, Fla., when a man blurted, "Hey, did you know your brother is dead?"

Until then, he didn't.

Crosby's widow, Kathryn, sitting on the patio of the mansion in Hillsborough, Calif., that she had shared with world's favorite croon-

er, smiled as she remembered Bing.

"I can't think of any better way for a golfer who sings for a living to finish the round," she said.

Crosby died in Spain just after completing a victorious round of golf.

Mrs. Crosby said the family had last been together in late August, when they taped

a Christmas television special — a family tradition.

Asked whether the show would be aired this Christmas, she instantly replied, "Of course it will. I think it's the best thing we've done. I think everyone will love it."

For Bob Hope, Crosby's close friend since both performed at New York City's Capitol Theater in 1932, words came harder than for most.

State of Shock

He gently closed the door on agent Allan Kalmus and a reporter as they arrived at his Waldorf Astoria suite in New York for an interview about Hope's Oct. 28 TV special, which Crosby was to narrate.

Kalmus described the comedian as being in a state of shock.

Although Hope's calls were screened and security guards

Tributes to Crosby Pour In

were placed in the halls while he went into a brief seclusion Friday, he did talk to reporters by telephone.

"I still don't believe it," he told the Associated Press. "I'm absolutely numb. I don't believe it. I saw him a couple of months ago and he seemed fine. I spoke to him on the telephone and he seemed in great spirits.

"He was playing golf and everything. I can't understand what happened..."

Hope canceled a benefit

appearance in Morristown, N.J.

"I just can't get funny tonight," he said. "It's just not in me. I'm getting calls from all over the world, but I just can't talk. I'm just too shocked."

Dorothy Lamour, who appeared with Hope and Crosby in the previous "Road" pictures and was to be in a coming one, "Road to the Fountain of Youth," said, "I hope that the road to heaven is as wonderful as the 'Roads' we traveled together."

Bob Crosby went on with his scheduled performance at Disney World Friday night.

"It's cornball," he told the audience, "but what I'm doing tonight is what he'd want me to do. The show must go on."

Then he added, "The toughest night of my life."

The other comments began to flood news wires:

Frank Sinatra — "The death of Bing Crosby is almost more than I can take. He was the father of my career, the idol of my youth and

the dear friend of my maturity. Bing leaves a gaping hole in our music and in the lives of everybody who ever loved him, and that's just about everybody."

George Burns — "It's a terrible shock to me What can you say about Crosby? He's an institution. He invented a style and the style will always be with us. While Crosby's gone, we'll always have his voice."

Fred Astaire — "I'm so sorry for all of us who valued him so much."



Examiner Photo by Robert McLeod

Kathryn Crosby met reporters in her home with grace and poise: 'I can't think of a better way for a golfer . . . to go'

Bing's widow: 'He'd had a good round'

By Bill Boldenweck

Kathryn Crosby was a study in class yesterday in the face of her great personal tragedy.

She met with reporters on the patio of her home with such poise and composure that even the most hardened of them were moved.

She walked from the house accompanied by Nathaniel, the Crosbys' youngest child, and introduced herself with a handshake for each reporter and photographer. Then she thanked them for coming.

"I'm very glad you're here," she said. "It's very helpful to support each other."

She might have been announcing the start of a charity drive but for the redness around her eyes and the paleness that cosmetics had been unable to conceal.

And under the white iron table she clutched Nathaniel's hand fiercely in her lap.

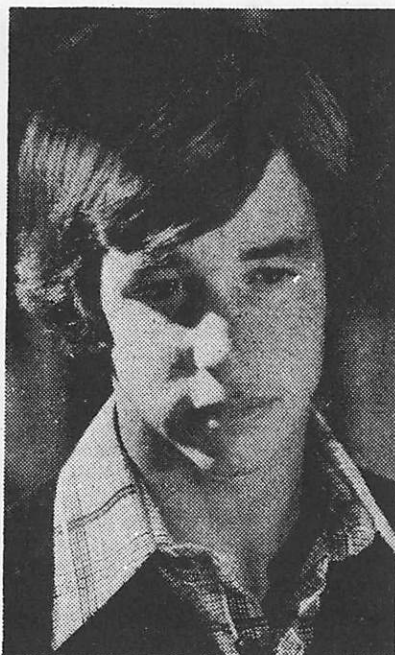
She faltered very slightly, very briefly, as she described the details of her husband's death. Otherwise her poise was unshaken.

And though it was unspoken, it became obvious that the Crosbys were a very loving and very happy family, and that there was a certain salvation in the reports of a quick, simple and easy death.

"Bing had been in Spain with a friend, a Mr. Zulueta," she said, "and I had just been talking with him on the phone."

"He said that they had played 18 holes and that Bing had had a very good round — I'd like that to be said."

"Mr. Zulueta asked him if he was tired, and Bing had said 'No,



NATHANIEL CROSBY
'Bing was very proud'

I'm not. It's a very easy course, not much of it uphill.' They had gone to the locker room, and then Bing fell."

Her voice broke, but she immediately recovered.

"They had an infirmary there, with a doctor, and oxygen, so I'm sure that anything that could have been done was done, and that he had only momentary discomfort."

She smiled slightly and added, "I can't think of a better way for a golfer who sings for a living to go — to have finished a good round."

Her son, Harry, was in London preparing to go to college, she said. Also there was the Crosbys' long-time butler, Alan Fisher. The two would go together to Spain to take

Crosby to Los Angeles for burial.

Her daughter, Mary Frances, was coming home from San Francisco where she had been studying with the American Conservatory Theater drama school.

"Bing was very proud of Nathaniel," she said, "he's a one handicap golfer, and he had good reason to be very proud of all his children."

She said that one of Bing's joys in the recent summer months was taking Nathaniel around the pro golfing tour circuit to see the matches.

Nathaniel smiled shyly as he said he will be 16 on October 25. Softly he said, "I got much closer to him as we had a chance to go around alone together."

"In San Diego in July he ordered a beer for me and told the waitress it was a chaser for him," he said. His mother forgot herself and shot him an "Oh, my," look that mothers sometimes have when they peek into the world of fathers and sons.

"Bing had been working very hard lately," Mrs. Crosby said. "He was planning to go back to London on Nov. 21 for the Royal Variety Show for Her Majesty's Charities."

"And he was looking forward to going to Japan and Australia. The family tour through Britain was a great success."

She explained that funeral arrangements had not been completed but that services will be in Los Angeles next week. It will be a low Mass, she said, and Bob Noonan, who plays the organ at St. Mary's Cathedral and worked with the Crosbys at the Laguna Honda Christmas shows, will play.

Crosby will be buried in the family plot in Los Angeles, she said, where his parents, his brother Larry, and his first wife, Dixie, are buried.

Those who wish to make contributions in his memory can do so to the Bing Crosby Fund at Pebble Beach, funded by the annual Crosby Clambake golf tournament, which supports hospitals and student loan funds.

Mrs. Crosby had been in San Francisco, recording a reading program, when she was informed of her husband's death.

It was about an hour later when she arrived at the home alone, driving her silver Mercedes sports coupe, and swept through the electronic gate and up the drive.

Capt. Ernie Lena arrived, drove up to the house, then returned to the gate to call reporters together. "Mrs. Crosby has asked me to invite you to join her on the patio in a few minutes, where she can talk to you all at once after she's had a chance to compose herself. The maid is getting up some coffee for you."

A reporter thanked him. "Don't thank me," he replied, "thank her. She's a super person."

And he was right.

Sat., Oct. 15, 1977 ☆ ☆ S.F. EXAMINER—



Nathaniel Crosby holds his mother's hand as Kathryn talks with the press in their Hillsborough home

Sunday Mercury News October 16, 1977



CONDOLENCES — Harry Crosby, the son of Bing Crosby, is embraced by Caesar de Zulueta on arrival Saturday at Madrid Airport. Crosby suffered his fatal heart attack just after playing golf at Zulueta's golf course. —AP Wirephoto

MADRID, Spain (UPI) — Bing Crosby's teen-age son Harry arrived Saturday to carry his father's body home to California for a simple low Mass funeral "like he would have wanted."

The famous crooner who entertained three generations of fans collapsed and died at 73 Friday after finishing 18 holes of golf.

Harry, 19, one of Crosby's seven children, flew in from London to represent the family in the operation of getting through the red tape necessary for his father's body to leave Spain.

Young Crosby said the body would be flown to Los Angeles "for a quiet

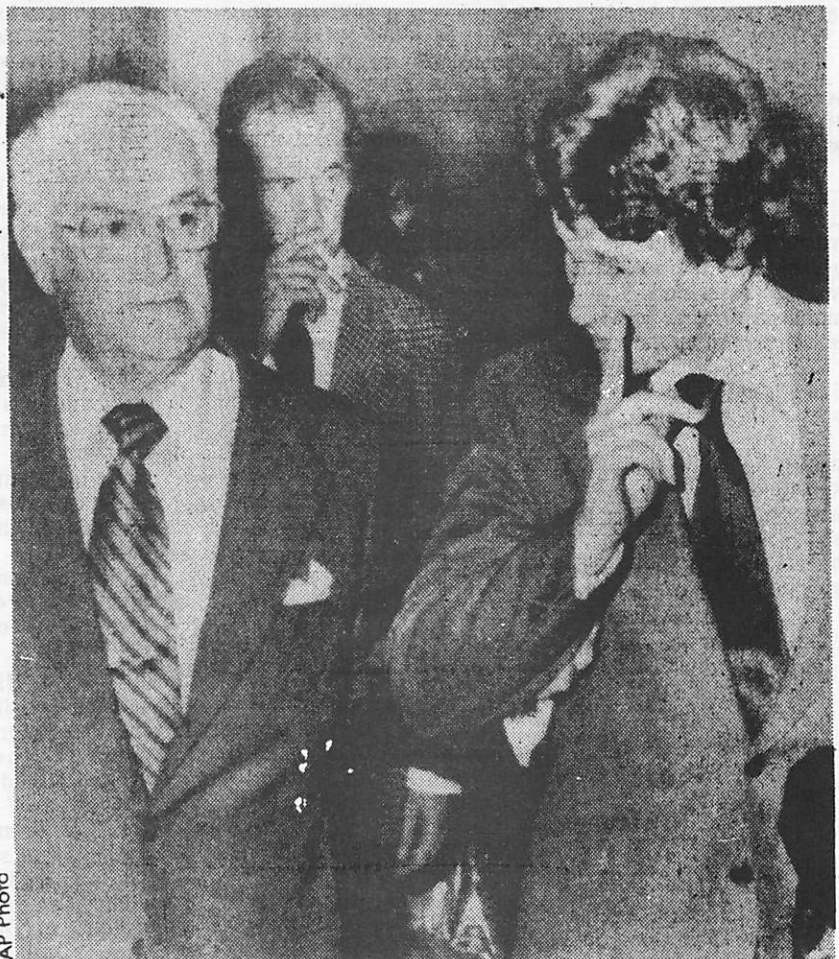
memorial Tuesday — a low Mass like my father would have wished."

Crosby's widow, Kathy, said Thursday that Crosby would be interred next to his first wife, Dixie Lee.

Harry said his father, who suffered a heart attack on a golf course, went "the way he would have wanted to die."

Still, young Crosby said that to the family, "it was an untimely death."

"He was more than a performer to me," the young Crosby told reporters in a slightly trembling voice. "He was a father and a wonderful father."



AP Photo

Harry Crosby, right, arrives at Madrid airport.

Bing's Son Arrives To Fly Body Home

Saddening Shock for Peninsula Neighbors

From the city manager of his home town, to people who met him strolling down Burlingame Avenue, to people who didn't know Bing Crosby at all — the news of his death Friday came as a saddening shock.

Congressman Leo J. Ryan telephoned from Washington his "regrets to the family. I was certainly very proud to represent him."

"He was a very understanding man, more than just a singer, a humorist with enough intelligence to see the foibles in our way of life."

"I feel a sense of loss, a

sense of awe that a person of that stature of talent was with us for a time."

"If Elvis Presley was a monument for his generation, Bing Crosby was a monument for three or four generations. He was as much of a national figure as any man that has lived in our history."

Dr. Stanley Hanfling of San Mateo, Crosby's family physician, described him as "a fine person, a fine patient. It was a pleasure knowing him. He had the attitude that life is too short to get mad at anybody. He never harbored a grudge."

"His heart had been good all along. He was in a very good condition for a man his age, aside from his back problem."

"He was making good recovery from the injury with physical therapy."

"He was strongly motivated to go on his tour. He felt that he had to keep on working and doing things. He enjoyed performing very much and was very optimistic about his future."

"I felt that he might have been attempting too much for a man of his age, but he wanted to keep doing things, which was perhaps best for him. When he went

to perform, he controlled himself and didn't overdo. He knew his own limitations."

"He did not yield well to inactivity. He wanted to keep busy and active."

Willie Kee, television photographer who had worked with Bing and Kathy Crosby for years, commented that Crosby was planning to celebrate the 20th anniversary of his marriage Oct. 24.

"They said that was the marriage that wouldn't last, and here it is 20 years later. I had seen her in Japan on a USO tour just before that and I didn't know at the time that she was running away from him."

"They both set the date and then called it off four or five times, and when I saw her in Japan it was one of those times."

Kee said Crosby "was very easy to work with," although meticulous in getting what he wanted.

When Crosby remodeled a portion of his Hillsborough home, Kee said, he called for Kee to photograph each one of some 80

pieces of fine-grained wood, so that the pictures and measurements of each piece could be sent to the architect designing the changes.

"We worked with him at the Concord Pavilion" in August, Kee said. "I think it was his last stateside appearance."

Crosby had been a patient at Peninsula Hospital with his recent injury, and had been a supporter of the hospital for years.

"We're deeply saddened," said hospital administrator Charles Mason Jr. "We're shocked at his passing, and deeply sympathetic toward his family. We are going to miss him. He was a true friend of the hospital."

Robert "Bob" Davidson, city manager for the Town of Hillsborough, said the news of Crosby's death had been received at the Town Hall with "great shock and disbelief."

"There is a numbness," he said, "a sense of loss to the community, and to the world in general."

"I think I can speak for everyone in the town government in saying that we have the greatest of respect for him and the family."

"Everybody in town who knew him, knew him as a neighbor-next-door type of guy."

The "everyday folks," those who "served" or "waited" on "Bing," will

always have a special place in their heart for him.

And they miss him.

To them he was a friend, not an important, talented and rich man whom they "served."

Ray Jasso, Burlingame barber who lives at 1816 Anamor St., Redwood City, sums it up for many of those who worked for Crosby this way:

"I gave Bing his last haircut just before he left for England."

"I'll miss him."

"I'll miss his humming a tune every time he came into the shop."

"He called me, 'amigo.'"

"We talked sports, baseball, boxing, the horses — you name it."

"I'll miss him. I was his barber for 14 years."

Jasso's barber shop is at 1423 Broadway.

Crosby's Hillsborough neighbors recall how they'd see him strolling down the lane, sometimes with his black Labradors, often swinging a golf club.

He was friendly but not outgoing, they said.

The Crosbys' parish priest, the Rev. Fergus Lawless of Our Lady of Angels Church, recalled how Crosby regularly came to the earliest Sunday Mass, at 7 a.m., and usually sat in the front row.

"He always looked healthy, always full of life. He'd sing along with the songs and he'd carry them right out into the yard," Father Lawless said. "He

was very jolly about the whole thing."

Neighborhood children who gathered in front of the Crosby estate Friday afternoon swapped stories about the celebrity and remembered him as a genial and generous guy.

Steve Radulovich, 14, an altar boy at Our Lady of Angels Church, remembered how he and a buddy were playing basketball one Sunday afternoon at the church playground as Crosby was on his way to Mass.

"He was betting me that I couldn't make certain shots, but I made them," Steve said. Then pausing, he added, "He owes me money."

One Christmas, Crosby bought \$10 worth of Christmas Seals from Steve's brother Tim, 12. And the boys remember getting 50 cents each from him at Halloween.

"When I saw him in the movies, he looked so young, but when you saw him in person he looked almost the same," marveled Steve.

A neighbor, Warren Rosenquist, remembers spotting him alone in the corner of an Italian delicatessen in nearby Burlingame one day, munching a sandwich.

"He liked it here because nobody bothered him," said Father Lawless. "He could come and go and nobody bothered him."

Rosenquist said Crosby socialized with only one neighbor — an orthodontist who had cared for his children's teeth.

He recalled his own first meeting with Bing. "I saw him as a kid, when I was caddying at a country club in Minneapolis. What impressed me the most was that his taxi was sitting there with the meter running and he was on the driving tee. And this was the middle of the Depression."

Crosby's last American appearance was before many of his San Francisco area friends. Before leaving for Europe in August, he performed at the Concord Pavilion, 35 miles east of San Francisco.



AP Wirephoto



UPI Telephoto

Londoners Mourn Bing

A crowd that overflowed London's Westminster Cathedral into the street mourned Bing Crosby at a Mass yesterday. Among the throng was Delta Burke (left), a 20-year-old student who

is a friend of the late singer's son, Harry. Crosby, recently performing in London, had attended services in the cathedral two weeks ago.

Mon., Oct. 17, 1977

San Francisco Chronicle

3,000 Pack St. Patrick's for Crosby Mass

By SHERYL McCARTHY

Thousands of New Yorkers, many of whom had been charmed by Bing Crosby's portrayal of a wise and genial priest in the movies "Going My Way" and "The Bells of St. Mary's," thronged St. Patrick's Cathedral yesterday to pay their last respects to the entertainer.

A private funeral service for Crosby will be held today in Westwood, Calif. Crosby's body was in New York briefly yesterday afternoon for a change of planes en route from Madrid to Los Angeles.

At St. Patrick's, while the organ softly played "The Bells of St. Mary's" in the background, Cardinal Cooke gave Communion to about 3,000 who overflowed into the aisles of the cathedral for a Mass in Crosby's memory.

"An American Institution"

The majority of the communicants had been Crosby's contemporaries — gray and white-haired men and women who felt they had known him personally.

"You feel that when someone has become as much of an American institution as Crosby had that he has to go on forever," said Gordon Manswer, 68, who was a college student in Washington when Crosby started singing in and around Spokane.

"You come to pay your respects at a time like this because of what he has contributed to the whole world."

Cardinal Cooke, who presided at the Mass, offered a prayer of thanks "on



Associated Press photo

Workmen put casket containing body of Bing Crosby on jet in Madrid for flight to U.S. Later, Cardinal Cooke officiates at St. Patrick's Cathedral Mass attended by 3,000 in singer's memory.



News photo by Willie Anderson

behalf of millions of people to whom he brought so much happiness."

Bishop Theodore McCarrick, vicar for east Manhattan, delivered the homily, praising Crosby as both a good entertainer and a good man.

Comedian Bob Hope, a long-time friend of Crosby's, phoned a message from Los Angeles. Band leader Sammy Kaye and retired Metropolitan Opera singer Rise Stevens, who once co-star-

red with Crosby, were among those present.

At Madrid Airport earlier, the scene was solemn as a hearse carrying Crosby's body pulled up to a commercial jetliner.



UPI Telephoto

KATHRYN CROSBY SPEAKS AT NEWS CONFERENCE ABOUT HER LATE HUSBAND
Her children—Harry, left, Mary Frances and Nathaniel—accompany her at Los Angeles International Airport.



—AP Wirephoto

Bing Crosby Buried in 'Very Private' Service

By Kevin Leary
Chronicle Correspondent

Los Angeles

It was still as dark as night at 5:30 yesterday morning when the family and closest friends of Bing Crosby assembled at St. Paul the Apostle Catholic Church for a "very private" funeral.

The pre-dawn Mass of the Resurrection was planned to avoid the crush of fans and celebrity seekers that have turned so many show business funerals into carnivals.

The plan worked. There were only 35 persons at the tiny rectory chapel that seats 16. About 30 reporters and photographers remained outside in the church's Spanish-style courtyard.

"That's the way Bing wanted it

er, tense with dark circles under his eyes, arrived, followed by the sons from Bing's first marriage — Gary, Dennis, Philip and Lindsay — all grim-faced and silent.

Then Bob Hope walked into the chapel with his familiar stroll. Hope, a friend for 40 years and partner in seven "road" movies, whistled uncomfortably as he made his way through the media gauntlet.

As the mourners gathered in the chapel, Bob Moonan, the organist at Old St. Mary's Church in San Francisco and a family friend, played some of the songs that marked the gentleman crooner's 50-year-career in every part of show business.

The faint strains of "Galway Bay," "Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ra," and "The Bells of St. Mary's" could barely be heard in the courtyard.

The service was brief — just over half an hour.

The Mass, Father Kieser told reporters afterwards, was "a joyous occasion, celebrating Bing's union

— a simple ceremony — it was in his will. That's the kind of guy he was," said the Rev. Ellwood Kieser, an old family friend who officiated over the funeral service.

Twenty minutes before the 6 a.m. service, the widow, Kathryn Crosby, arrived on the arm of her 19-year-old son, Harry. They were trailed by her daughter Mary Francis, 17, and son Nathaniel, 15.

There were no questions as the family made its way through the silent group of reporters.

Then came comedian-band leader Phil Harris, an old Crosby hunting buddy. Singer Rosemary Clooney came next.

Then Bob Crosby, Bing's broth-

with the Lord."

"Bing could laugh as fully as he did because he knew how to cry, and he knew how to cry because he believed so fully in the Lord," the Paulist priest said.

When the service was over, Mrs. Crosby, in a black dress and black silk veil, forced a brave smile and said to Mary Francis: "Okay, straighten my veil. Ready? Let's go." Then she led her children and her four step-sons to waiting limousines.

The polished oak casket, covered with a blanket of pink roses, was placed in the hearse and the procession began a seven-mile drive to Holy Cross Cemetery in Culver City.

The funeral cortege turned onto the Santa Monica Freeway and ran into the morning commute rush. But the eight-man police motorcycle escort herded the procession through the heavy traffic without incident or delay.

Crosby's six sons acted as pallbearers at the cemetery.

Without expression, they carried their father to his final resting place, next to the graves of his first wife, Wilma (Dixie Lee), who died in 1952, his father Harry Lowe Crosby, who died in 1950, and his mother, Catherine, who died in 1964.

Father Kieser recited the traditional burial prayers and led the mourners in The Lord's Prayer.

The graveside ceremony lasted seven minutes. The whole funeral was over by 7:30 a.m., when the sun was losing its battle to the morning smog.

The Crosby family plot is located in one of Holy Cross Cemetery's finest sites, called The Grotto. A duplication of the shrine at Lourdes stands over the simple two-foot-wide stone grave markers that are flush with the trimmed lawn.

Crosby's grave is only 12 feet from where Bela Lugosi is buried, and about 25 yards from the grave of slain actress Sharon Tate.

As the last family member left the cemetery, a crew of grave

diggers placed the casket in a concrete vault and lowered it into the grave.

"For a celebrity funeral, this was ideal," said grounds superintendent Raul Frias, who was directing the burial. "It was just right, no crowds — not a lot of people around."

The last mourner to leave the cemetery was an old, out-of-work, bit part actor who was turned away from the chapel door when he tried to attend the funeral.

"I just love that man," he said, tears running down his face. "He went down in my book as the greatest inspiration of my life. I just wanted to say how much happiness he has brought the world."

"You know, I left my rosary on his casket. Do you think they'll leave it there?"

He walked over to where the casket was being lowered and took a last look.

"They left it," he said. "It's right on top of the casket."

Goodby, Bing



San Francisco Examiner
October 18, 1977

Kathryn Crosby: 'Most of me doesn't realize . . . he won't be coming home . . .'

— AP Photo



AP Wirephoto

Members and relatives of the Bing Crosby family at the graveside service: Seated from left, Bing's widow, Kathryn; son Nathaniel; daughter Mary Francis; son Harry; son Dennis; sister Mary Rose Pool. Standing behind Mrs. Pool was Crosby's brother Bob, and standing in the center was son Gary



TRIBUTE TO CROSBY — In a two-hour tribute on NBC-TV Friday, Bing Crosby and Bob Hope will be seen together in rare footage of their first appearance together at the Capitol

Theater in New York in 1932. There will also be clips from some of their "Road" pictures. Crosby died last week in Spain. (UPI)

Bob Hope, LA Make Tributes

LOS ANGELES (UPI) — Bob Hope and Los Angeles County are paying singular tributes to Bing Crosby.

Hope announced plans Monday to cancel his two-hour television special, "Bob Hope's Road to Hollywood," Oct. 28, and substitute a two-hour tribute to the dead singer.

The show will include film footage of appearances at which Hope and Crosby first met and of their first experimentation with comedy together, at the Capital Theater in New York 45 years ago, when Hope was booked as an emcee for a Crosby appearance.

It also will include film clips from the "Road" movies and other joint appearances, said

producer Howard W. Koch.

Meanwhile, county supervisors ordered the Coliseum torch lighted Monday night, when Crosby's body arrived by jetliner from Spain, until his burial today.

The torch, left over from the 1932 Olympics, burned during the games that year and has been lighted only twice since, at the assassinations of President John F. Kennedy and his brother, Sen. Robert F. Kennedy, who was shot in a Los Angeles hotel kitchen.

"It will be like a giant candle in the sky for Bing Crosby," said Supervisor Kenneth Hahn. "He was one of the world's greatest entertainers and was a devoted sports fan."

Chico Enterprise-Record
October 22, 1977

Chico Enterprise-Record
October 18, 1977

Bing has always meant a lot to me. First of all, he had a voice that will never be equal to anyone but, more than that, with all his success he was also a very humble person. You can't very well replace anyone with those virtues.

Harry Fulmer
Lindenwold, N.J.

City Pays Tribute to Its Singing Son

By HUGH DAVIS

Hundreds of Spokane residents today by their presence paid tribute to a local legend, attending a memorial service at St. Aloysius Roman Catholic Church in honor of Harry Lillis "Bing" Crosby.

Before the ceremony, some who had come to honor Gonzaga University's "most acclaimed alumnus" strolled past Crosby's childhood home, E508 Sharp. Only five blocks away at the University administration building, a group of Crosby's classmates, honorary pallbearers, gathered and marched the short distance to the church.

Inside the church where Crosby took communion and sang in the choir decades ago, the Very Rev. Bernard J. Coughlin, S.J., Gonzaga's president, began the litany of the legend.

"There has been so much said about Bing Crosby in so many languages around the world," Father Coughlin began, "about not only his voice, manner and personality, trademarks of that which was good and lovable.

"I think most that speaks best of the man, for all his talent and fame, is that he never lost the simplicity and modesty of the little boy who

grew up in this neighborhood and served mass here.

"Bing Crosby was Gonzaga's most-acclaimed alumnus and the world's most-loved star," Father Coughlin said in a soft voice, "but for all that, he never lost sight of that which was most important in his life, his Christian faith and the importance of God in his life."

The Rev. Arthur L. Dussault, one of Crosby's friends, traced five decades of association with the crooner through a homily.

"Jesuits are not inclined to eulogize the man," said Father Dussault, "but to speak about death, about the Resurrection.

"But when a man is so exceptional in talents and acceptance amongst his peers, and it appears that even the cruel biting criticism customarily directed at public figures could produce no glaring faults, it is no wonder that this person was universally loved and respected."

Father Dussault said that since Crosby's death Friday many news media people have asked what Bing best might be remembered for voice, his songs, his generosity, his casual sense of great entertainment, his repeated

endeavors for better environment.

"In my judgment it could be the innate goodness of this man who gave top priority to the reverence and love of his God," said the white-haired Jesuit priest.

Father Dussault asked the capacity crowd in the church to join him in prayer, "...For this unassuming but specially gifted man who has had worldwide influence for good. How we will all miss his warm, genuine personality, his constant interest in us, especially his close friends and his alma mater, Gonzaga University."

At the end of the homily for his special friend, Father Dussault referred to a hushed crowd of almost 38,000 people at Joe Albi Stadium Saturday night, who heard a brief prayer.

"The unique impact of Bing Crosby flowed from his simply being himself. Even in his greatest moments of fame he remained modest, unaffected, and natural, genuinely concerned for his two families and very loyal to old friends, to his alma mater, his country, to his God," Father Dussault offered in the prayer at the Washington State University-UCLA football game.

"We reverently bow our heads in memory of Harry Lillis Crosby, 'Bing,' who by his peers has been called giant and superstar, and who now is becoming a legend. We thank you, Lord, for one of the finest men in our generation whom we were privileged to know and to love. May he rest in peace. Amen."

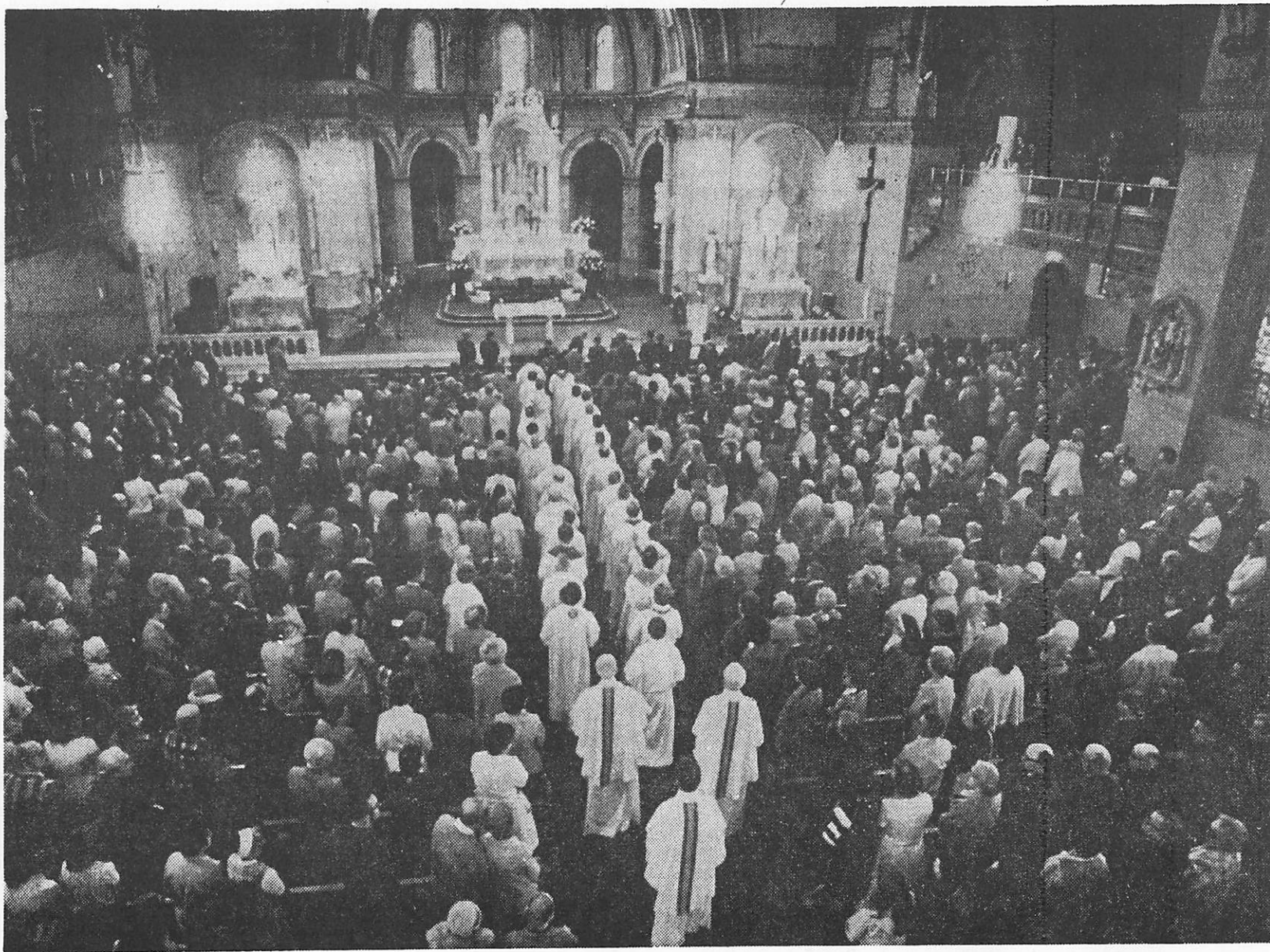
Earlier today in Westwood, Calif., at St. Paul's The Apostle Roman Catholic Church, Crosby's two families heard a similar litany.

No doubt in other cities touched by the mellow magic of America's enduring personality, there was notice that Bing Crosby had departed, that he was "Going My Way."

Crosby, as Spokane, America and the world in sorrow learned Friday, died at the age of 74 after a round of golf in Spain.

IN MEMORIAM: Bing Crosby and his wife, Kathryn, had just finished two sold-out weeks on the stage in London, where their former man-about-everything, Alan Fisher, was once again watching and caring for them. In a letter to a friend in Hillsborough, Alan had written, "I miss Hillsborough so much, and it is wonderful to be with the Crosbys again — even if only for a short time." Then Bing went to Spain to — as usual — play some golf.

Bing will be missed. Especially by his good friends at the Burlingame Club. It was quite the usual thing to see Bing come into the terrace room for a late lunch, where he would help himself to some soup and salad and then sit and talk to whoever happened to be around. He never even bothered to wear his usual hat. He was among friends.



In Memoriam

A procession of Jesuit priests traced today the path Bing Crosby walked when he served mass at St. Aloysius Roman Catholic Church here. For the Mass of Resurrection which

remembered Spokane's famous son, the priests were joined by those who had been his friends for 50 years and by hundreds of Spokaneites who admired the late performer.

A Quiet, Early-Morning Mass in Burlingame

Bing Crosby didn't like to have anyone make a fuss over him when he worshiped in his church.

To miss the crowds on Sundays, he would quietly slip in among the handful of largely middle-aged and elderly who regularly attend the 7 a.m. Mass at Our Lady of the Angels Church in Burlingame, the late entertainer's parish the past 15 years.

And there was no big crowd at the church yesterday for an early-morning memorial Mass for Crosby, who died Friday on a golf course in Spain at the age of 74.

At his family's request, the simple, dignified ceremony was little publicized, to avoid a possible crush of mourners and fans.

Nevertheless, close to 150 worshipers joined with the Rev. Donald Burke in eucharistic prayer for "our friend, a man whose God-given gifts and talents gave joy and happiness to countless millions."

In the brogue of his native Ireland, the bearded young Franciscan priest reminded them that "Bing will sing no more here — but he will sing with the Lord forever."

A number of parishioners came to the Mass not knowing

it would be devoted to the memory of the church's most famous worshiper.

And the lack of publicity or a large turnout upset one elderly woman in a way that perhaps reflected the widespread affection Bing Crosby enjoyed among his fellow churchgoers.

"I hope people don't think this means we don't care," she said to a reporter, tears brimming in her eyes.

Another mourner, Helen Taylor, 57, a Palo Alto teacher, talked of her long-time routine of driving up the Peninsula to the Burlingame

church's early Masses "so I could be in the same place with a gentle man and a gentleman I've long admired. He was never too big to remember God."

The woman said she's been keeping scrapbooks of Crosby's career and collecting his records since she was a teenager.

It may come as a surprise to today's young people, she said, smiling, that "my father would forbid me to listen to Bing's music. He thought it was too modern, with all that ba-ba-ba-boo-boo stuff. I had to hang out an upstairs window to hear him on a friend's radio."

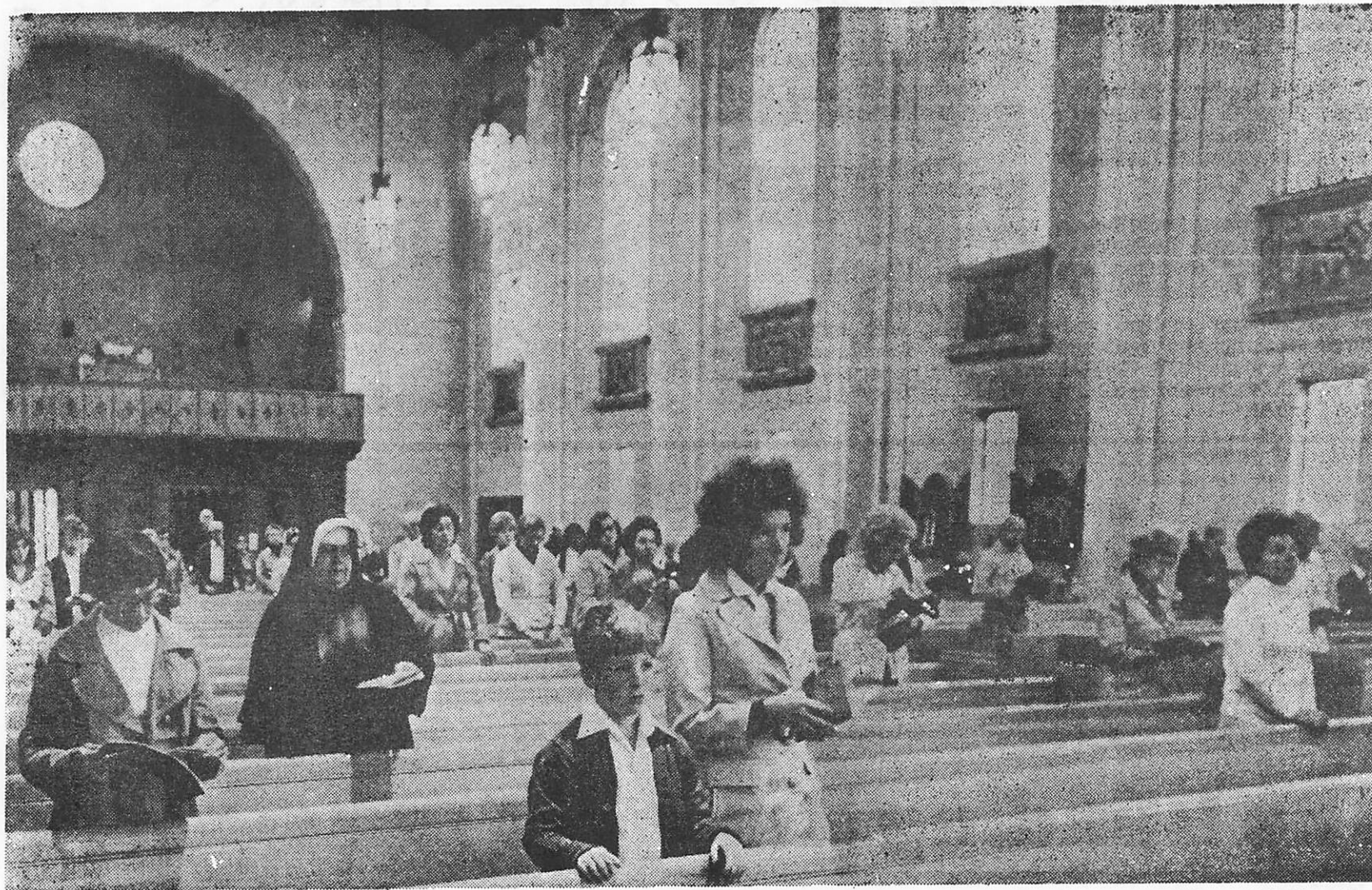
I was on vacation in San Francisco, walking along sightseeing, when all of a sudden the newspaper headline caught my eye. I just couldn't believe what I was seeing, and to this day I really still don't. In all the years I've been a fan of Bing's nothing has happened to change my feelings, in fact they became stronger.

Being able to attend a special Memorial Mass at Bing's church in Burlingame, California, along with Priscilla and Pat, is something that I will cherish always. I am very grateful to Priscilla for taking me along, and I thank her once again.

As golfer, Arnold Palmer, said, "We won't know how much we'll miss him until we realize he's not here anymore." I think this puts into the right words just the way I feel.

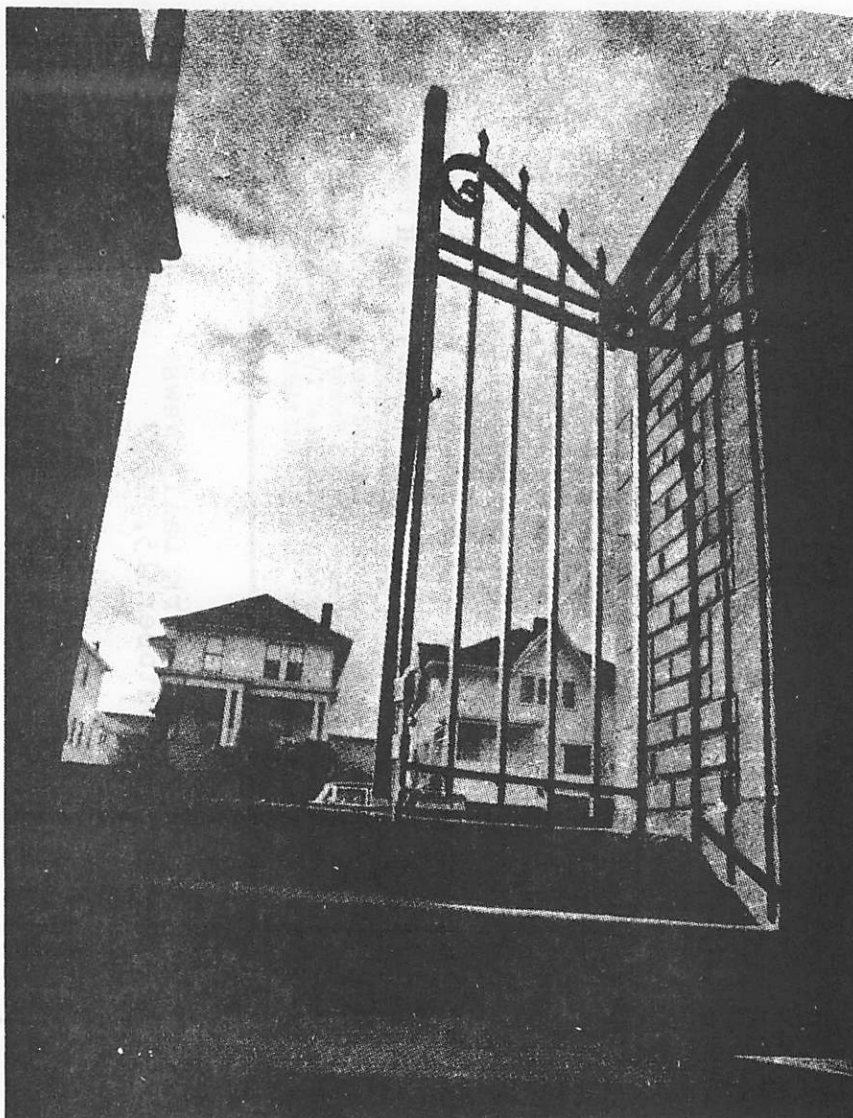
Rena Albanesi
Bridgeport, Connecticut

Memorial at Bing's Church



By Clem Albers

Parishoners paid tribute to fellow-worshipper Bing Crosby in a Mass at Our Lady of the Angels Church



Staff photo

Bing's childhood home in Tacoma still stands

Bing's boyhood home still stands in Tacoma

By **MARLOWE CHURCHILL**
TNT Staff Writer

Bing Crosby's former home at 1112 N. J St. probably hasn't changed much since he last saw it, the present owners said yesterday.

But the late Tacoma-born crooner probably wouldn't recognize the house that now sits tightly clustered with other large homes in a North End residential area.

"This used to be the only house on the block," said Mrs. Morry H. Abbott, who has lived in the house with her husband for 29 years.

The house is across the street from St. Patrick's Catholic School and has a fine view of Commencement Bay.

Crosby was born in Tacoma in 1904 and lived in the spacious two-story, wood-framed house two years before moving to Spokane.

Mrs. Abbott said Crosby, who died yesterday while playing golf in Spain, never visited the house since they have lived in it.

However, several of Crosby's relatives have come to the house and reminisced about old times.

The Abbotts said they were deeply saddened by Crosby's death.

Mr. Ken Twiss, 6814 South G St., Tacoma, Wash. 98408, has been dedicated for some years to the idea of achieving historical landmark status for the Crosby birthplace in Tacoma.

The latest report from Ken is that three legal matters must precede the incorporation of a "Bing Crosby Birthplace Society." These include a receipt of approval from the Crosby family, receipt of an option on purchase of the house from the present owners, and receipt of a statement of intent from the Tacoma Public Library.

Club Crosby thoroughly endorses the concept of a Crosby museum and feels that the choice of the Crosby birthplace is an especially appropriate one.

We hope to have more information on this project in our next journal but, in the meantime, I know Ken Twiss would appreciate suggestions as to the type of memorial you would prefer, letters of support, etc. Other possible options would be a room in the Washington Historical Society, etc.

I hope I can report in the next issue of our journal that Ken's tireless work on behalf of a Crosby memorial is progressing satisfactorily. Club Crosby supports his efforts in a project very dear to our hearts.



Bob Hope and Bing share tete-a-tete at Waldorf-Astoria dinner, January, 1970.

'Road' Shows Over Hope Mourns Old Pal

By KAY GARDELLA and MICHAEL ORESKES

All that was left for Bob Hope last night were the memories of half a century with his friend and fellow trouser Bing Crosby. But for these he was thankful.

"I think two people, two fellows, are very lucky to find a combination that has chemistry," Hope had told *The News* in an interview just minutes before word of his friend's death reached New York.

Then half the formula was gone and Hope, who could make millions laugh through the pain of war, was hurting.

He did something he hardly ever does—he canceled an appearance scheduled for last night at a benefit in Morristown, N.J., for Overlook Hospital in neighboring Summit.

"I just can't get funny tonight," Hope said in a brief phone conversation from his suite in the Waldorf-Astoria shortly after talking about Crosby in the interview with *News* TV-radio editor Kay Gardella. "It's just not in me. I'm getting calls from all over the world, but I just can't talk. I'm just too shocked."

Returns to California

Then he packed his bag and flew home to California.

Earlier, Hope had been talking about the chemistry, the real friendship behind the on-stage jibes and banter and he talked enthusiastically about their plans for yet another movie in their seemingly endless "road" series.

This one would have been called "The Road to the Fountain of Youth"—a road that ran out for Bing Crosby.

"He's a wonderful guy," Hope had said of Crosby. "When you get to know him and he gets to like you he's something else. He's a surprise guy."

Hope recalled: "He was the kind of guy who would show up at the studio with his shoelaces untied. He'd put them on at home and say, 'Well, I gotta take them off when I get out of the car.'"

Would Just Pop In

Crosby was the same in his private life. "Every once in awhile you'll be sitting around at home in your underwear or something," said Hope, "and he'll walk in and say: 'What time is lunch?'"

When the Crosby kids were younger, Hope reminisced, Bing used to bring the whole clan around at Christmas and sing the carols that helped make him famous around the world.

Despite the image they projected to the public, Hope and Crosby always got along. "We always had a light jab out for each other because the audience expected that — they like that kind of friction and fun thing," said Hope.

Hope summed up their professional relationship with a gag that could very well have been dredged from the vaudeville stage of the Capitol Theater, where the pair first met in 1932. He quipped:

"There's nothing I wouldn't do for Bing and there's nothing Bing wouldn't do for me. And that's the way we go through life: doing nothing for each other."

Beneath it all, he said, "there is that friendship — and if there wasn't that friendship, we wouldn't work together so much."

On Thursday, the last contract details had been worked out for the eighth "The Road to . . ." movie, Hope said. And Crosby had been scheduled for a taping Oct. 24 as part of a "Salute to Bob Hope" TV special.

"That's not important now," Hope said last night, "I'm going home."

New York Daily News
October 15, 1977

HERB CAEN



The Bing In Our Life

I TURNED ON the car radio shortly after noon yesterday and there was Bing Crosby on KMPX-FM, singing Hoagy Carmichael's "Lazy bones" in recorded duet with Louis (Satchmo) Armstrong, and it was, as always, a delight. These two old pros so obviously enjoyed each other's company. They were easy and loose laughing and swinging, each ad libbing lines that cracked up the other. The warmth was so palpable it almost oozed through the speaker.

It was only a few seconds later that I heard the newsflash that Bing Crosby had died. It came, as it must have to millions around the world, as a jolt to the midriff, a blow to the head. Suddenly, the most familiar voice of our time had been stilled, and those of us of a certain age knew that we had passed another milestone — a mighty one.

I pulled over into a parking space and thought about the many lives and sides of Harry Lillis (Bing) Crosby, a man I had first heard of on an old Paul Whiteman record called "Mississippi Mud." I met him shortly before World War II and I have known him, after a fashion, ever since — without really knowing him.

For one of the most public men in history, he was strangely private — without ever being rude. He suffered fools, autograph-seekers and columnists gladly, but he maintained his distance in the most elegant, sophisticated way, always knowing exactly how to break off a conversation, when to saunter toward the exit. His saunter, of course, became as famous as his pipe, his bow tie and his drawl.

Bing and Satchmo, a natural, glorying in each other's company as they harmonized on and noodled with "Lazybones." And yet I remembered the time, not too long before he died, when Satchmo said bitterly, "Bing Crosby and I have made records together, and appeared in public together, and yet that man has never had me in his house."

★ ★ ★

FOR A STAR of superstar caliber, Bing Crosby was amazingly low-key, accessible and even vulnerable. He would go alone to movies in San Francisco. I recently shared a hamburg-

A Herb Caen Special:

The Bing I Knew

er and shake with him at the Hippo on Van Ness, where the other customers stared at him or said hello but respected his privacy.

The contrast with Frank Sinatra was inescapable. Sinatra is the kind of insecure, basically hostile person who cannot travel without an entourage to stroke his ego, and linebacker-sized bodyguards to keep his fans at bay. Sinatra continually feels threatened, and acts threateningly. I remember a night in Las Vegas when a nice-looking young boy said, "Mr. Sinatra, I'd like you to meet my girlfriend." "Whaddya mean, YOU'd like me to meet your girlfriend," snarled Sinatra. "Whadda you, her agent or something? Is she so dumb she can't say for herself that she wants to meet me?" And so on as the young couple drifted off, red-faced, embarrassed. "Creeps," muttered Sinatra, returning to his drink.

Bing Crosby was beyond that kind of behavior. He never needed entourages, "go-phers" or bodyguards. He exuded the kind of reserved friendship that, all by itself, kept people, even the so-called "creeps," from pestering him. Nor did I ever hear him heckled. He may have been the best-liked man in the world, even among those who found his politics a shade on the conservative side. Bing definitely leaned to the right, but he was a master at keeping his political views to himself.

★ ★ ★

BING CROSBY, trouper, musician, one-time heavy boozier, always one of the boys. During Prohibition he was a familiar figure around the San Francisco speakeasies, where he was known to sleep it off between appearances at Market St. theaters. Musicians liked him because he talked their language, and was an appreciative contemporary of such legendary players as Bix Beiderbecke, Eddie Lang, Frankie Trumbauer and Jack Teagarden. On his radio shows and records, he always used the best jazz musicians. During all those years he was on the air with the Kraft Music Hall, he stuck with Jimmy Dorsey, whose band the sponsor found obnoxiously jazzy. "Jimmy's mah buddy," Bing would drawl. "He go, I go." They were both good drinkers at the time, but Bing knew when to quit and Jimmy died like so many jazz musicians — too young.

There was a wonderful, relaxed style about Bing. He admired the British, and dressed in the British manner, spending a fortune on what he always called "threads." In London, he stayed at one of the most conservative and quiet of hotels, the Stafford. He spoke in a rather elaborate way, using large words and enjoying them. He was, in a word, droll. As a

sample of his style, there was this note he wrote to me in 1971:

"I want to recount a little story I heard when I was in Paris a month or so ago, playing golf with some of my friends around there.

"They came out one day in a hilarious mood, laughing and breaking themselves up. I asked what was so funny?

"They told me then that one of their number — quite a man about town, something of a blade, and a social figure of considerable stature around Paris — told his wife one day that he had to go down to Morocco to attend the birthday party that was being held for the King of Morocco. He averred he would call her the next morning.

"However, he didn't got to Morocco at all.

"This may be a little spicy for your august column, but in any case, it might amuse you.

"Hope to see you soon on the courts."

★ ★ ★



UPI Telephoto

Nathaniel Crosby and his mother Kathryn walked back into their Hillsborough home yesterday after a press conference —

He went to the South of France with a 'bit of fluff.'

"Of course, it was the day of the big Moroccan shootout, but news of the conflict didn't reach our French friend's little chalet on the Grande Corniche, and when he called his wife the next morning, she asked, 'How was the reception?'

"'Oh,' he said, 'The usual boring thing.

"'Nothing special happened?' was her query.

"'No, ma chérie,' he replied. 'Just speeches and congratulations and champagne and one thing and another.'

"His return to Paris has been delayed.

Tennis courts, of course. Among his other attributes, Bing was a natural athlete. His golf swing was the envy of many a professional. And one day, when I asked "Do you play tennis?" he drawled, "Oh, a bit, nothing much," I should have known better. Although by his own admission he hadn't picked up a racquet in years, he sauntered onto the court, returned every ball with effortless ease, and won handily. Back in the locker room, he puffed on his pipe and said, eyes alight, "I say, we must do that again soon — although there's not really much to the game, is there?"

The last time I heard from Bing was shortly after the horrendous fall off a theater stage that must have shortened his life. I wrote him a short note of condolence, wishing him a speedy recovery, and twitting him for tarrying overlong in a Southern California hospital when Hillsborough was so much more salubrious.

"It's progressing satisfactorily," he wrote about his injuries, "if somewhat slowly, but I've been told I have a chance to duck an operation. An 80 per cent chance, which is encouraging.

"Trader Vic brought me some horse liniment and a big steel pyramid. He said if you sit inside the pyramid, the cosmic rays will cure anything. The way I feel now, I would sit inside the crater of the Mauna Loa volcano if it would help!

"But you know Trader. He's a hard man to duck."

In reply to my comment that I heard his records often on KMPX-FM, he went on, "Yes, KMPX is very kind to me. They play a lot of my stuff. Glad you get to hear it once in a while. Hm. Once in a while. Not a bad title for a song.

"I stayed in Southern California too long. You are right. I should have got out of there right after the accident, because the first few weeks I was so sedated I didn't know where I was.

"Hope to run into you soon in one of the local bistros."

That would be nice. Very nice. Old Bing sauntering in, wearing his London threads, chewing his pipe, settling down on a stool in that easy manner of his, and drawling, "Shall we share a libation on the altar of friendship?" Even though he only drank soda water, most of the time, he would have made it seem like an occasion. He always did.





Dan Hruby
EXECUTIVE SPORTS EDITOR

A sister remembers

CARMEL — Mary Rose Crosby Pool sat beside her telephone Saturday morning, responding to the calls from sympathetic friends that seemed to come in electronic tidal waves.

Mrs. Pool, Bing Crosby's only surviving sister, lives on a quiet, tree-shaded Carmel street only a mile from an off-Ocean avenue office where she works as a realtor.

On a shelf in the corner, in a treasured position, is a picture of Bing and Mary Rose as children.



GARY CROSBY
... Stanford back

"I still can't believe he's gone," she said. "It hasn't hit me yet."

Her husband, Jim, one of the unsung U.S. Navy heroes of WWII, shook his head.

"You know it has to happen one day," he said. "But when it does, it is really hard to believe."

As Mrs. Pool read the lengthy newspaper accounts of Bing's death, she looked up and said, "At least he didn't suffer. And there couldn't have been a better place for it to happen than on a golf course. To think it could have happened on stage would have been very embarrassing

to him."

Mrs. Pool's thoughts drifted to her childhood in Spokane, Wash., where her father, Harry Lowe Crosby, was a brewery bookkeeper.

"My sister Kay (Mrs. Catherine Mullin, who died in Watsonville in 1974) was very close to my brother Ted," she said. "I was closest to Bing. He was my big brother, always looking after me. Then, in later years, he was my confidante."

"Bing's interest in sports and golf goes way back. As a boy, he played everything—baseball, football, basketball."

IN A SNOWY CLIME, IT WAS natural Bing would try winter sports, too.

"Oh, he became quite an ice skater. I remember his skates were black and when he wasn't skating I could use them. I didn't care about fashions then—black skates were fine for me."

"A lot of people don't know it, but Bing was a terrific swimmer. We went to this big public pool in Spokane and he won about every medal they had. And then when he went to Gonzaga he concentrated mostly on baseball."

Bing always had an eye out for any of his offspring who might show athletic talent, Mrs. Pool noted. His oldest son, Gary, was a fullback at Stanford for a season in the early '50's. Most of the other boys dabbled in one sport or another in high school.

"Bing always bought them sports books," she said. "If they showed any interest, he would encourage them. I know Nathaniel and Bing used to listen to a lot of the games together. And, of course, Nathaniel has played in Bing's tournament."

AS THE TOURNAMENT GAINED status and fame, it became a gathering place for the families. Bing's sister, Kay, didn't follow golf all that closely. But friends recall she felt drawn to it from her Watsonville home. One time she started off for the tournament but stopped off to see a friend in Pacific Grove. She never did get to Pebble Beach that time, although she made it on other occasions.

"We all would meet at Del Monte Lodge and friends would come by," Mrs. Pool said. "This, of course, has happened right up to this last tournament."

Now, only Mrs. Pool, who is in her mid-60's, and Bob—a former bandleader who lives in San Diego—survive from the family of seven children.

Bing's death has left a cloud of doubt over the Monte-

rey Peninsula on whether the tournament will continue.

"I certainly feel it should go on," Mrs. Pool said. "Bing would want it to, I'm sure. That was his baby. It has meant so much to the various charities involved and to the Monterey Peninsula community."

Many Carmel residents don't realize that one of the Crosby clan lives among them. Mrs. Pool is a gracious, personable businesswoman who rarely mentions her famous brother in public.

"It really hasn't been a problem, for me, having a famous person as my brother," she said. "I always took pride in what he has accomplished and in our relationship. The only thing that would disturb me was when someone came up and questioned me in a doubting way about being Bing's sister. They would say, 'You're not really his sister, are you?' What could I do—sing a few lines of 'Buh, buh, buh boo?'"

"I finally found the best answer was, 'Well, we do have the same mother and father.' That seemed to end the conversation."

It was a riposte that Bing would have appreciated.

By Bob Keely

JAST THANKSGIVING EVE we were waiting to board a Western Airlines flight from San Francisco to Las Vegas, when a man in an old overcoat and battered hat joined us in the line. It was Bing Crosby, en route with his family for a charity performance in the huge Aladdin Theatre for the Performing Arts. We told him we were on our way to see the show, a fundraiser to build a much-needed church whose congregation had been holding services in a Las Vegas saloon.

"Not going to be much of a show," Bing said. "Just a bunch of old songs." Bing was like that. He never thought of himself as great.

But it was a great show in Las Vegas, as we knew it would be, with Bing at his best, singing one old-time favorite after another with the Joe

Bushkin Quartet, cavorting around the stage with his beautiful Kathy and their children, Harry, Mary Frances and Nathaniel. He never thought of himself as a great entertainer. In our opinion, he was the greatest ever.

★ ★ ★

His Neighbors Remember Bing

BURLINGAME (AP) — Bing Crosby never wore his toupee when he came in to Ray Jasso's barber shop on Broadway for the past 14 years.

Instead, Mr. Crosby would wear one of his crushable golfing hats, or a comfortable model with a feather in the hatband, Jasso said, after learning his most famous customer had died in Spain of a heart attack.

"I'll miss his humming a tune every time he came into the shop," Jasso said. "He always called me amigo."

"Most of the younger people did not recognize him. He had aged a lot in the past few years. People didn't come in to see him very often, but sometimes they did, asking for autographs. It never bothered him. He didn't mind. He was a swell guy."

Joanne Ihrer, a former neigh-

bor, recalled that once she was driving along a road and almost hit a man in the roadway.

Not recognizing him, she rolled down her window and shouted angrily: "Jesus Christ! Get out of the road!"

The stroller, who was Mr. Crosby, turned around and replied calmly: "Not Jesus Christ — Bing."

Many years ago when Crosby's son, Gary, was playing football at Bellarmine in San Jose, the famous entertainer could often be seen sitting alone in the stands watching a game.

When Gary's first movie came out, a theater in Millbrae advertised it this way on the marquee: "Starring Crosby (Gary, that is)." One day the elder Crosby walked into the middle of a busy street, dodging traffic to take a snapshot of the marquee."

Bing remembered: New York publicist Bernie Green did some work for the late Bing Crosby last winter when the singer was in that city for a concert series. Green recalled that he had scheduled a luncheon interview for Crosby, and, waiting outside the restaurant for him, Green looked up and saw Crosby walking down the street, toward him. "Why didn't you tell the cabby to let you off right at the door?" Green asked. "I didn't take a cab," replied Crosby. "I came on the crosstown bus."

I feel Bing is still with us through film, records, etc. I would like to write more about how Bing has affected our family, but I can't get the words out. One day, God willing, we'll all sit down up There and do a medley.

Jim (Bing) Johnson
New York, N.Y.

Living memorial to Bing Crosby

By Nelson Cullenward
Examiner Golf Writer

The Directors of the Bing Crosby National Pro-Amateur Golf Championship meet today in Monterey to discuss the fate of the tournament that has graced the fairways of Pebble Beach ever since the late Bing Crosby brought it to the environs of the Del Monte Forest in 1946.

We doubt that Dan Searle, tournament chairman, and his group will cancel the tournament that has brought fame to the area and aided local charities for the past three decades.

For one thing, plans are already completed for the 1978 Crosby Clambake next January and it is doubtful that the committee would renege on TV and program commitments because sponsor Harry Lillis Crosby died in Spain last Friday.

Searle, who has been on the committee since the Crosby first came to Monterey, told me earlier this year that if Bing ever passed on, "we hope we can always keep the tournament going as a living memorial to Bing Crosby, a real friend of golf."

Bing has always had a deep interest in sports, ever since he came out of Spokane to make his name in the entertainment world. Golf was a special love and along with Bob Hope, Bing became the main bulwark of the PGA tour in its early years.

He started the Crosby Clambake in Rancho Santa Fe in 1937, a course near his Del Mar Race Track, and it proved an instant success.

When World War II came along and Bing had to curtail his tournament he joined comedian Hope in playing exhibition matches all over the country to raise money for the war bond effort. Millions of dollars were poured into the coffers by the generous efforts of Crosby and Hope. They also kept pro golf alive during those parlous war times.



Bing Crosby (white hat) at early Clambake with Craig Wood and other friends

Continued on Page 98

Suddenly, terribly, Bing Crosby is no longer there

● **Editor's Note:** *Tri-Valley Herald* columnist Ray Orrock herewith shares his thoughts about the death of Bing Crosby

By RAY ORROCK

I'm not sure how to begin this piece, for a number of reasons — one of which is that it's both a eulogy and an apology.

Well, let me start this way:

A few days ago I received a letter from Sharon Collins of Dublin, who wrote: "I felt I just had to write and express my appreciation. I've loved Elvis Presley for 23 years, and for 23 years I have suffered various degrees of ridicule and teasing. After reading your 'Soliloquy On Strutters,' it's nice to

know that there's somebody who understands."

I felt a little sheepish when I read Sharon's letter, because what I'd said in that column is that I understood how Presley could have generated such excitement and loyalty in his fans — because he was an accomplished strutter, and a good strutter can knock anybody crosseyed.

What I did not say in that column is that I understood the level of emotional response his death produced. Statements like "I loved him as if he were my own brother," and "Something terribly important has gone out of my life." Those seemed to me a bit extravagant; Presley was, after all, just an entertainer. So I did not pretend to under-

stand responses like those because, in fact, I didn't.

But I do now.

Thirty minutes ago I learned Bing Crosby is dead.

I'm still shaken by that incomprehensible information, and I suspect I'm going to be for quite some time.

It's incomprehensible because, while that sad report may be accurate, it's not *right*. There's something wrong with a world without Bing Crosby. A Bing Crosby is supposed to be always *there*; he doesn't die — just as mountains don't die, and oceans don't die, and music doesn't die.

And a world without him is a little *lunatic* — a planet tilted slightly off its axis. A world

with blue trees and roads that lead to nowhere.

Pretty extravagant feelings for a 48-year-old man. Yes. But, like Miniver Cheevy, I've got reasons.

There has never been a moment in my life when Bing Crosby wasn't there.

I was weaned on "When The Blue Of The Night Meets The Gold Of The Day"; I sat for hours in front of an old, one-eyed radio listening to the Kraft Music Hall; I saw "Holiday Inn" a dozen times, and suffered mightily when the sequel "White Christmas" squandered its promise and squelched his talent; I hustled on down to the Uptown Theater whenever a Crosby-Hope "Road" picture was playing, and laughed out loud,

and tossed off Crosby-lines around the schoolyard for a week afterwards.

I watched him lose his hair, and gracefully glide from romantic leads to — To what? Crosby parts. There's no other term, because there's no other person who could have played those roles. Not like that.

I read somewhere, more than once, that Crosby's voice has been heard by more people than any other voice in the world. That's probably true, since the last estimate on his total record sales was 362 million. And the greatest seller of any record to date is still "White Christmas," which has sold over 100 million copies all by itself.

But Crosby was much, much more than a

voice. It was the man who came through the recordings and the movies and the radio shows that I related to, and he was one of the most comfortable guys guys I'd ever encountered.

He was a little bit jaunty and a little bit self-effacing; a little bit thoughtful and a little bit silly; a little bit concerned and a little bit amused over the world and all its works and pomps. He was almost the embodiment of Kipling's man who could "keep his head when all about him are losing theirs" — not because he understood the situation, but simply because he didn't feel there was any point in getting all worked up over anything.

Because of the age difference, I never thought of him as a brother. But several times I wished he were my uncle.

I'll tell you one thing I'm sure of, though: he was my friend.

I never met him, but I know he liked me. And I'm absolutely sure that, if Bing and I could have found the opportunity to sit down in some quiet bar for a few hours, we would have hit it off immediately. We would have talked and laughed and swapped stories and enjoyed one another's company immensely. And when it was time to leave, he would have clapped me on the shoulder and said: "Junior, you're all right! We must needs do this again upon the morrow" — or some other

silly Crosbyish line. We would have *stayed* friends, too.

And the fact that several million other people were sure that Bing would have reacted to them in exactly that same way does nothing to change my convictions.

I'll never have that chance now. But, at the moment, I know some things that I didn't know this morning.

Thirty minutes ago I realized that I loved that man.

And something terribly important has gone out of my life.

Sharon, I know how you feel. Right now I feel a little like crying.

Maybe I will.

On October 14, 1977, a friend left us. It's still hard for me to comprehend that this remarkable man is no longer with us. It's also difficult for me to actually realize that I worked closely with him on no less than six long playing albums - including what now amounts to the final chapter in his massive commercial discography.

I liked him enormously, and I miss him. And even if I had not had the great pleasure of knowing and working with the inimitable Bing Crosby, I would still feel a deep sense of loss for there can be no question that this man was the best-loved entertainer of all time.

It offers very little consolation, I know, but I like to believe that dear old Bing went the way he would have wanted to go - after making a superb album, doing a sensational concert tour and playing a great game of golf. He was indisputably a winner to the end.

Writing this piece has been far from easy for me, because in the seven days since Bing's death I have been inundated with numerous phone calls and offered all kinds of propositions to write this article or do that interview - simply because of my connection with Bing - and have written two sleeve notes (first for SEASONS, the last album, and the second for a re-packaged version of last year's Palladium album). And each of these tasks has taken its toll on my resilience.

I last saw Bing three days before he died. This was at the photo session for the SEASONS album cover. We were planning the next album - a duet package with Bob Hope to be recorded after the Royal Variety Show in November. In fact, Pete Moore, Chris Harding (of Polydor) and myself were scheduled to fly to California on Monday, October 17 to meet with Bing and Bob to work out the repertoire and routines. Chris was feeling particularly good because Bing had finally agreed to the six-album deal we had been negotiating with Polydor.

Apart from agreeing a big cash advance, the Polydor people also gave Bing permission to do one "outside" album for Decca. So he was feeling pretty good. He told us that he was highly delighted with the way the SEASONS album had turned out.

When the photo session was over, we drove back to Bing's flat. We shook hands and said goodbye with plans to meet up in California at the end of the following week. That was the last time I saw Bing Crosby.

My impressions of this talented man, and my memories of knowing and working with him leave me very sad. He was not only an extremely gifted entertainer, he was a real gentleman. A man of good taste, a man with a sense of humour and, above all, a man who was kind and considerate to others. I have never known any artist as cooperative with his supporters as Bing was.

Mind you, I don't want to give the impression that he was a saint. Like any human being, Bing had his mischievous side. But such moments were always short-lived. And, on reflection, I liked him just as he was.

If I was ever asked to name Bing's most admirable quality, I would say it was his reliability. In all my dealings with him, I never once encountered anything that smacked of unreliability. Even on the one occasion when he

couldn't make a recording session, he phoned me and explained why he wasn't able to attend. "I feel bad about letting you down, Ken," he said. "I don't usually like to record to a track. But in this case I know I can confidently leave the choice of tempo to you and Pete. I can lay my voice on at a later date."

I had heard stories that he could be uncooperative, but I never actually saw such instances. Not once in any of the sessions which he did with Pete Moore and I did we have a cross word. He took direction beautifully and on the rare occasions when I criticized his delivery or his intonation, he swiftly rectified all errors.

In my opinion the final album that Bing recorded has turned out to be the greatest of all his LPs of recent years. Everyone who was connected with it felt that Bing was really inspired on these sessions - but you don't have to take my word for it, I'm sure that Leslie Gaylor will attest to the fact that Bing's famous voice was on top form throughout each of the three sessions.

There is not much more I care to say at this point, except that it was a great honour for me to be associated with this legendary singer. I know I will always treasure his memory.

* * * * *

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A last note from Bing

JACK O'BRIAN

We almost couldn't believe it: the morning Bing Crosby was buried the mail at our Broadway office brought one final letter from Bing Crosby. We'd written a column about Bing's comment to us before he flew to Europe for his latest series of all-charity performances, stretched from Oslo to London's Palladium; Bing had told us he doubted he could make it as a singing star starting out these days because there were perhaps 1,000 talented youngsters seeking stardom, whereas in his day there were maybe only six or eight such as Russ Columbo, Morton Downey, Rudy Vallee, Arthur Tracy, the Street Singer.

We hardly flunked our loyalty test in dismissing Bing's retroactive fears, rooted in such sincere humility, and proceeded herein to analyze Bing's unending superiority which lasted until the day he died. Bing's letter which he dated Sept. 29 carried an Oct. 3 British postoffice stamp canceled with the royal imprint huckstering "The World Wildlife Fund" which "Welcome British Wildlife Stamps to be issued 5 October." It was sent by sea-mail. Bing's signature was in the upper lefthand corner of the pale blue envelope with no address; it was a certainty Bing needed none: The world was Bing's address, as well as his oyster.

Inside, on matching baby blue stationery (Asprey's?), was Bing's always friendly, as for decades, greeting and acknowledgment that he'd read our article, noting our dissection of the early-crooner syndrome was "a true picture of the crooning cadre of the early 30s and of times before that."

"I listened to a couple of old (John) McCormack records the other day and was impressed anew at his marvelous artistry and the scope of his talent. My dad had all his records and everybody

elses, too. The concerts are going well here. I'm convinced I'm the outstanding beneficiary of the Nostalgia Trend now current. Of course, the British always are loyal to anyone they've ever liked. They never forget you and they want you to know it. I did a concert in Oslo, Norway — those are nice folks up there in a prosperous and well-managed country, and it's quite beautiful, too. And great salmon fishing.

"Another 10 shows here at the Palladium and then home for some TV. Be sure and catch our Christmas show this year (including) a fellow named Stanley Baxter, a very gifted performer, Ron Moody, Twiggy, David Bowie. Baxter does Hope as a Court Jester of the 17th century. Priceless characterization." Ending with, "Thanks Jack — stay well. Yours, Bing."

It was an emotional startler to receive that final letter from Bing. Oddly, it arrived the same day we programmed a radio show we had taped last December when Bing was in New York for his series of charity performances for Fordham Prep (at N.Y. Philharmonic Hall) and a limited and remarkably generous run at the Uris Theater whose receipts Bing gave in their entirety — he paid all his own expenses and his family's — to several of his pet, as Bing noted in his wittily exaggerated verbiage, "eleemosynary benignancies." They were that.

The two broadcasts we did with Bing almost a year ago were awash with rosy memories of his ambitious younger days when he started, later his impactful arrival in network radio, appearances in movie theaters from the N.Y. Paramount where Bing was signed for two weeks and stayed 29, rising from \$2,500 a week to an amazing — for then — \$7,500, thereafter touring to such cultural centers as our home burg, exotic Buffalo, where he played the Great Lakes Theater (where we ushered at a tender but entirely appreciatively young teenager).



We'd edited the two programs into one warm, nostalgic, unaffected, cheerfully and wittily humble single hour. We wanted a slight sense of production to prevail so we sent to station WQR's music librarian John McCarthy for records of Bing's "Blue of the Night," theme song to start the show and "White Christmas" to fade it out. The two-record album, "Bing's Biggest Hits," was delivered by John who handed us the album with: "The letter from Bing this morning isn't the whole story — look at the liner notes inside the LP."

We looked: we had totally forgotten that more than 25 years ago Dave Kapp, of Decca Records, had commissioned us as a friend of Bing's to write its extensive biography and appreciation of Bing.

Bing's death alone was an emotional crunch: the letter arriving the day Bing was buried was another, bigger one. Then the album out of Bing's and, peripherally, our own past did it. We cried. Proudly.

The crooner's gone

Say one for us all, Bing

By Zan Thompson

You could make a pitcher of punch last all evening at the Grove if you took tiny sips. And it cost \$3.50 so you'd better make it last. That was the Coconut Grove, the real one with the monkeys with the flashing electric eyes, hanging in the palm trees and at the end of the room, a full wall mural of a waterfall and tropical trees. It was painted by the same school of artists who specialized in sunsets on bass drums, surely the most poignant, primitive art ever painted.

We were Beverly Hills High School freshmen and it was Friday night at the Grove. Bing Crosby, Al Rinker and Harry Barris were the Rhythm Boys and especially ours. I was usually with Marshall Wilkinson, the best dancer in our class. He still is.

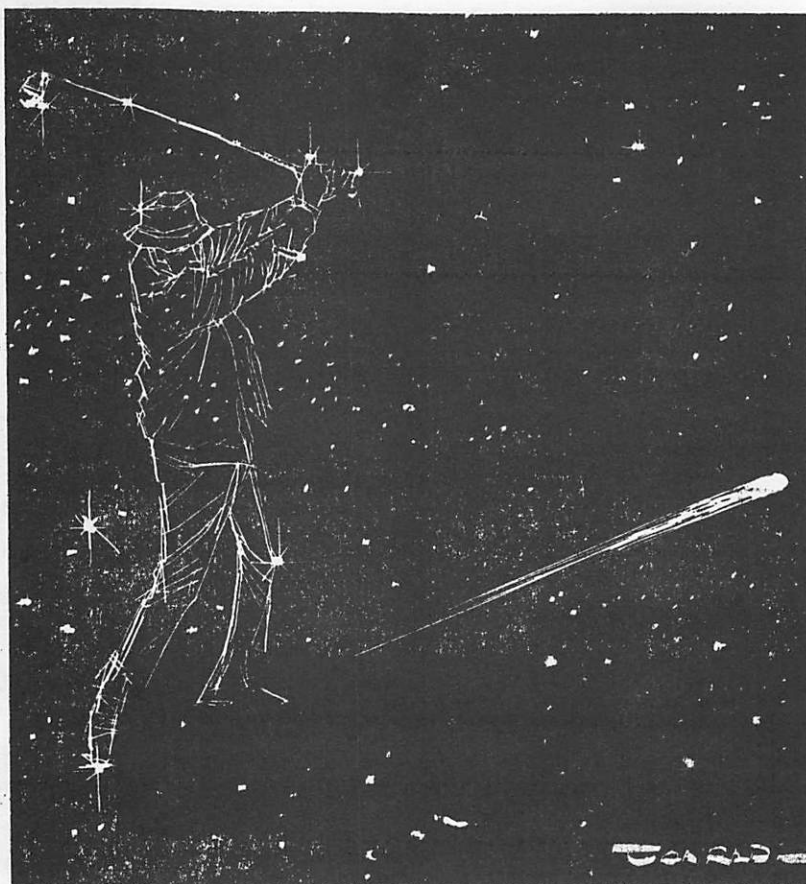
One night, at Grey Morgan's house on Rodeo (Grey was a Beverly boy, of course), Crosby and friends came by after their show. Barris played the piano and Bing sang. One of the tunes was, "Beside a Shady Nook," which Barris had just written. Crosby was a friend of Grey's parents and we were allowed to lean in the corner and listen.

Bing Crosby became one of the people in the center of our lives. We were the kids who went to high school during the depression, played World War II and the Korean conflict and saw the guys come home to a different world and we were different girls.

During the lean days when I tossed a coin to decide whether to buy a pair of shoes for a date with a USC boy or lunches at school for a week, Bing sang a song called, "Pennies From Heaven." You knew that he was working steady but it was nice to know that Bing still knew that pennies counted.

It's all been said. The musical savants have written that Bing took singing out of the conservatory and brought it into the living room.

His name is told all over the world.



"Did you ever swing on a star?"

There is a legend about some G.I.s in the South Pacific who were trying to identify themselves as Americans to some head-hunters.

"Eisenhower?" Nothing. Not a name brought a flicker. Finally, one of the guys sang a few bars of "White Christmas."

"Bing Crosby," shouted the aborigine. Apocryphal? Oh, honey, does it matter? It was Bing and everybody knew him.

One of the kids in our high school class had every record Bing had ever made and he brought them over to my house for a party one night.

In the middle of the evening, my grandfather came stomping down the stairs in an awful gray bathrobe, waving a blackthorn cane and order the Crosby records removed and something else played. I considered running away from home but it's kind of hard when you're 13 and can't ride a bicycle.

Bing Crosby was so much a part of our lives, it is impossible to accept the fact that when Christmas comes, he won't be around. His records will, sure, and when Christmas Eve turns

midnight, at my house, the record will be, "Adeste Fideles," in the original Latin and never mind the simplified version.

Last spring, I was sitting in a thatch-roofed, white-washed restaurant on a tip of land jutting into the sea. And I really watched the sun go down on Galway Bay, as I raised a glass of the craythur to himself.

Crosby? I even have a 78 of "Dream Girl of PKA."

It's nice and snug to know that Bing Crosby is in heaven. Good for us who are still trying to get the grade points.

Hey, Mr. Crosby, once I heard you at the Morgans, and a long time ago, I talked to your butler on the telephone, and cried when a bomber called The Trojan Spirit went down over France and you were always with us — the Beverly Brats.

And, Mr. Crosby, next time you say one, say one for me. And for the rest of us in the cheaper seats who sat in the back of the Grove and toasted you with watery punch and love.

In Memorium

It's hard to find anything to say about Bing Crosby that hasn't already been said elsewhere and often. That he was a great entertainer and a greater neighbor are facts well-known to residents of our community to which the Crosby family has contributed so much.

We all have our own special memories of Bing—walking his dog along Hillsborough streets, shopping along the Avenue, lending his support to the Concours and other fund-raising events, trying to be just the guy next door (yet always possessed of that certain magic that somehow set him apart from the rest of us).

We'd like to lay special claim to Bing Crosby, but we know that's impossible. While he may have lived in Hillsborough, he was a citizen of the world. We will miss him.

—RAY DE ARAGON PHOTO



Bing Crosby

The legacy of Bing Crosby is twofold. As a singer and actor he leaves a repertory of recordings, motion pictures and video tapes behind him which will live on.

But the second part of his legacy is even greater. It is his humanity. Bing—though he was one of the world's most loved entertainers—never deviated from his beliefs in his religion, the worth of the family and a moral commitment to decency

and truth.

Certainly, we will all remember him for his marvelous songs and his outstanding performances. But he will be remembered too as a man who never wavered in his loyalty to the only things that really matter.

Bing Crosby made his mark as a consummate entertainer—but also as a good man. Nothing higher can be said of anyone.

love singing from listening to Count John McCormack.

"We had some records of his when I was young and he taught me style. The other singer who influenced me greatly was Jolson. He was the most extraordinary performer I have ever seen. I don't know what happened when he came on stage, except it didn't happen with anyone else.

"Now the chances are you haven't got a voice like McCormack nor a stage personality like Jolson, but I want you to know that if, when you sing with me, you display an ounce of their talent I shall retire for ever and become your manager." After our duet he looked at me sadly. "Guess I'm back on the road for another 50 years," he said, shaking his head.

He had a genuine and very deep affection for this country, for its raccourses and its golf, but most especially for its people. He told me many times that although he had been coming to Britain for more than forty years he never failed to be amazed by the genuine warmth of the reception given to him by the British public. "I've been lucky. Wherever I go people seem pleased to see me but I get a much deeper response in Britain. People here treat me like an old friend. They are courteous and charming and it's all so civilised," he said.

When he had finished my show and was on his way home with his hat-box under his arm I asked if he wanted the limousine. "No I'll get a taxi," he said.

I said: "Look, I don't want to seem nosy, but what is all this business about you and taxis?" "Well," he said, "I like London taxis. I've always used them. I get on very well with the drivers. Once, during a taxi strike and a blizzard in London when I had to get quickly to a date, I just stood outside Claridges, raised my hand, and four cabs pulled up from nowhere eager to take me anywhere I wanted to go."

I must have looked sceptical because he smiled and said: "But if you want to know the real reason why I always use London taxis I must confess that all the years I've been using them I've never yet been charged a penny fare. The drivers always say to me at the end of the journey: 'That's on me Bing, for all the pleasure you've given me.' I can't think of a better compliment than that."

I asked him if there had ever been an occasion when a taxi driver hadn't recognised him. "Coupla times they weren't sure. I could see them looking at me through the mirror trying to work it out," he said. "What happened then? Did you have to pay?" I asked. "Nope," he said. "I just sang a few bars of 'White Christmas' loud enough for them to hear so as to clear up any doubts in their minds."

Film star

BING CROSBY never tried very hard to adapt himself to the changes which overtook the cinema during the five decades of his career. Other stars might, as the years went by, make changes in the personality they presented on the screen, but not Bing.

His voice, of course, he could not change; the public, devoted since the days of "Mississippi," "Rhythm on the Range" and "Pennies from Heaven" would never have sanctioned any alteration. For it was the voice which first made him beloved.

Today when pop music is deafening, the Crosby style may seem almost genteel. But one must not underestimate the technique — the emotional effects beautifully calculated, the seemingly casual pace and rhythm subtly precise.

And on the screen the whole personality had the same agreeable qualities. The air of indolence which sustained the crooner Crosby sustained also the comedian Crosby, and when in the 1940s he joined Bob Hope and Dorothy Lamour in the light-hearted fantasies of the Road series — "Road to Singapore", "Road to Zanzibar" and the rest — the charm of the easy-goer, the non-tryer it was which always won him the girl.

During the Forties he moved a stage further and in Leo McCarey's sentimental successes "Going My Way" and (with Ingrid Bergman) "The Bells of St Mary's" he assumed the character of a benevolent (and musical) priest. In 1950 he played in Capra's "Riding High", in 1955 he appeared (with Grace Kelly) in a purely dramatic role as the guilt-ridden alcoholic of the screen version of Clifford Odets's "The Country Girl." In the mid-Sixties he was seen in a faintly satirical part in the gangster-joke "Robin and the Seven Hoods."

But basically the personality was unaltered, amiable, gently confident, the long, rather sad face still conquering melancholy, the gestures still happily unhurried. Looking back, one likes to remember him—his dancing as comfortably languid as his singing—in "White Christmas," in "Blue Skies," in "High Society." In his own range he has never had any rival.

Dilys Powell

The golfer

EVERYTHING ABOUT Bing Crosby seemed effortless; not least his golf, which was good enough to enable him to enter for the postwar Amateur Championship at St Andrews, where, though beaten in the first round, he contrived in front of a vast crowd to open with two threes. If ever a man proved the old adage that it is better to swing smoothly through the ball than to bash at it, he did. Millions of viewers will remember his performances during the BBC pro-celebrity series at Gleneagles where he just kept quietly hitting the ball down the middle, often outplaying and outscoring players with lower handicaps and half his age.

I wonder if anyone ever heard him raise his voice or quicken the tempo of his speech? Certainly I never did. Nor did I, or I imagine anyone else, ever hear anything but kind words spoken about him. If ever there was a "natural" it was Bing. Perhaps the best example is a story was related by that great golfing impresario, Fred Corcoran, who died recently.

During the last war he was in Hollywood discussing a fund-raising tour: "After finishing the day's shooting, Bing changed into his loafing clothes and we walked down the street to a big sound studio where he had to cut a record. The place was empty except for the band and the Andrews Sisters and a man who sat at the far end of the studio. It was Jerome Kern, the song-writer. Bing and the girls hummed the song a couple of times, then cut the record with the band. Then they hummed it over again and made another cut. That was it. The whole business took no more than ten minutes and the record sold in the millions. It was a song called "Don't Fence Me In."

Henry Longhurst

AT ONE TIME almost every picture taken of Bing Crosby seemed to feature a pipe amiably gripped between his teeth, the very symbol of contented, reliable, ordinary-Joe manhood. In his later years, he gave up smoking, yet he'd still delight in telling you that he once won a bet by swimming ten lengths puffing at a lit pipe.

That was quintessential Bing. His debonair jauntiness never left him. He was sports-mad—horses, baseball, fishing and especially golf—but he had an edge in virtually everything he did over most of us. He won that swimming bet. He was a very good golfer. He gave all Walter Mittys something to aspire to—including his singing.

If popular music is the most pervasively inescapable art form of our century, then Bing Crosby is arguably our age's most influential artist. Almost alone, transforming a rich variety of musical and vaudeville styles, he created a new, personal vocal idiom which still echoes around the world.

Recalling his early professional days in the 1920s, he told me last year: "I used to listen to those trained singers, really forcing for volume and high notes. I just couldn't understand what they were saying. I sure hated that. I wanted to sing conversationally, to reach people with the meaning."

Reach the people, he did. He sang to them, not at them. His achievement was unparalleled: around 500 million discs sold, well over 4,000 different songs

VOICE OF EVERYMAN

Derek Jewell on an 'average guy'

recorded, and upwards of 70 movies made. He reached the singers too. Without his fashioning of a personal musical revolution there would be no Sinatra, Como, Bennett, Bassey, no Diamond or Tom Jones, no Elvis and rock 'n' roll even, for he established not only a style but also a freedom for solo singers to do what they liked within the Afro-American idiom.

He fooled the world again by entitling his autobiography: "Call Me Lucky." So he was in some ways. He was fortunate that he began singing professionally in the 1920s just as wild young American was embracing jazz and was ready to shape its own distinctive popular music; just as radio, talkies, the microphone and records were about to change the face of entertainment.

But Crosby capitalised on his luck. Singing with Paul Whiteman's band in the 1920s, he picked up the freedoms of jazz, used its inflections in his singing. "For phrasing, for taste, jazz was the start of me," he said. From vaudeville stars, he learned the art of timing, improving upon it when he made films with the great comedy director, Mack Sennett.

The words he sang—to which

he so much wanted to give meaning—were no problem. In Spokane, Washington, the state where he was born Harry Lillis Crosby on May 2, 1904, he had become a star schoolboy elocutionist. "I took those eloquent lines in my teeth and shook them as a terrier shakes a bone," he said of melodramatic epics like Robert W. Service's "The Shooting of Dan McGrew."

As the 1930s dawned he took to the road as a solo artist and suddenly his career exploded. He was the first singer to have his own radio show, and it brought him national fame. He began his long series of films.

Effectively Bing became the voice of our mid-century, the warm, amiable and eloquent medium of everyman's hopes, nightmares and fantasies. His love songs were the accompaniment of dating, marriage, farewells, reunions and deaths for more than one generation. "White Christmas" (an unparalleled 30-million-seller) was the nostalgic anthem of the Second World War and of the much-interrupted peace which followed it. "Buddy, Can You Spare A Dime?" was equally the universal cipher for bad times.

Inevitably, Bing's all-round

appeal — women liked him for his gentle voice, men for his sports-loving, regular-guy masculinity — brought him immense riches, which he increased by shrewd investment in oil, ranching, horses and other business ventures. Yet his success did not inspire enmities. The world enjoyed rather than envied him; and his mock-feuding partner; Bob Hope, set the tone: "He doesn't pay taxes. He just calls the Treasury and asks them how much they need."

Crosby's unflagging work for charities increased the regard in which he was held. So did his two successful marriages, first to the film star, Dixie Lee, by whom he had four sons, and, after her death, to Kathryn Grant, who gave him two sons and a daughter.

And now, it's over. With the world's most genuine sadness tempered by the perfection of the ending. He finished his singing career in London, his favourite city, and his voice after 73 years was astonishingly undimmed in quality if more limited in pitch. He told me last year that he still sang everywhere: in the shower, taking long walks, writing letters — but never on the golf course, which is where he died. "That would be conspicuous. At golf, I only allow myself to whistle."

Yet, of course it isn't really over. The world will remember him in the sentence which he once agreed should be his epitaph: "He was an average guy who could carry a tune."

ARTS GUARDIAN

APPRECIATION

Bing's fling John Samuel pays tribute to the Old Groaner

BING CROSBY'S last public appearance was on Monday at the Brighton Centre, opened only a month before by the Prime Minister and the venue of the Labour Party Conference.

It was an emotional night for four thousand of us. The first half was given over mostly to his fellow artists. Rosemary Clooney, Joe Buskin, his wife Kathy and his son Harry. The second half was the Groaner's. He took us, mostly a middle-aged audience, through a set of memories which left us not sad, not even nostalgic, but simply glad. We packed our grips for San Fernando, saw blues skies shining above, were made happy when skies were grey, and on and on through the litany of wonderful pop which for so long had been a part of our lives. Uttered always, as now, with exact musical taste and tim-

ing from a man we could not believe had been born in 1904.

Could he be 73? Was that a toupee? All such thoughts were wafted away on an instant by this man's wide and his generous personality. The voice never croaked or missed. The talent seemed timeless. For 20 full minutes he went from one great hit—suddenly, one realised, a great Crosby hit—to another.

"A man worth a couple of divisions," Eisenhower said of him, as of Glenn Miller, in the Second World War. A man of simple, direct values, whose voice first crackled over those Parlophone 78s of the late twenties and thirties, going on and on about the Mississippi mud, yet bringing a stamp to our feet and a rhythm to our hearts.

Joe Buskin, in his last show, was a jazzman, an inspired pianist whose quartet

might wander into an Islington pub and play all night for the sheer joy of it. Bushkin on Monday was clearly inspired just to be in the presence of Crosby, and his halting musician's lingo—"Here's one I was lucky enough to compose for the Dorsey Orchestra"—contrasted with the dexterity of his fingers and the superb beat which he and the singer gave to their music. Crosby was in the great dual American tradition of music and show business, of huge talent brilliantly paced.

For three-and-a-half hours he was barely off stage except for the interval. If the most modest talent belonged to his son, Harry, strumming a guitar, singing a modern pop song without the keenest pitch, he was embraced by his father's warmth. Bing, like so many of the great folk heroes, turned few away, least of all

the most ordinary. Yet with the true showman's timing he could say to his Brighton audience, as the show mounted to its climax, "and here in the audience we're delighted to have your own Gracie Fields." Yet we felt only spine-prickling excitement, not the embarrassed wriggle from show business schmalts. Singing of love and romance over Hollywood roads that might have tested Pilgrim, Bing Crosby never took a false step. Monday night in Brighton was no exception.

He died, as he would no doubt have preferred, not on stage but on a golf course. The Bing Crosby Classic was no showcase for a singer. Golf was a genuine passion. Crosby would meet his guests for his West Coast tournament personally, our own Pat Ward-Thomas included. Always his audiences knew of his innate courtesy.

Doing what came naturally

HARRY Lillis 'Bing' Crosby was the man who changed popular singing from a barnstorming novelty into an art worth having opinions on.

Singing 'B.C.'—before Crosby—was the business of Al Jolson, the effortful salesman; marvellous but limited blues singers of the black race; and assorted wavery tenors and megaphone-touting college heroes like Rudy Vallee. Crosby took a little from each, and built a style that convinced us so well that we now think of it as utterly 'natural.' As though there could be anything natural about getting up in front of a 20-piece band and making declarations of love in foxtrot rhythm.

Crosby was born in 1904, in

RUSSELL DAVIES on the art of Bing Crosby

Tacoma, Washington State, and grew up in Spokane. By the time he was admitted to Gonzaga College in 1920, to study law, he was a Dixieland drummer of sorts, and his work with a band called the Juicy Seven soon put an end to the legal studies. Joining up with a childhood pal, Al Rinker, Crosby went into vaudeville, where the duo was augmented (and the resulting trio knocked into shape) by a go-getting type called Harry Barris. These were the Rhythm Boys. They were signed up at once by Paul Whiteman, in whose aesthetically disposed orchestra Crosby would sometimes

have to sit with a rubber-stringed fake violin at his chin; but he was also entrusted with plenty of solo songs.

Although Paul Whiteman's records are most highly prized today for the brief interventions of his jazz soloists—especially the cornetist Bix Beiderbecke—Crosby's contributions are fascinating. He still has the slightly buzzing vibrato of the sophomore-tenor school, and sometimes affects Beiderbecke's clever laggardly phrasing; while in the high register, he will burst out into a mock heroic tone that has something of John McCormack as well as of Jolson in it.

This trademark he always kept. He had others, too, in the early days, notably a passionate 'oh' or 'ah' to introduce important phrases; a little insouciant trill to end them; and above all the famous 'ba-ba-boom' gimmick, a white Everyman's pastiche of Louis Armstrong's scat-singing.

By the early thirties, the so-called Groaner's style had become delightfully relaxed, reconciling conversational rhythms brilliantly with the essential dance music beat. Success on radio, and in the Whiteman film 'King of Jazz,' took him to Hollywood, where for a time they deemed it necessary to glue back his ears to the side of his head.

Mad comedies and sentimental musicals were his early forte, and he stuck by them. The vein of surrealism ran on strongly through his 'Road' pictures with Bob Hope, while in the forties the sentimentality was in huge demand. 'Holiday Inn' brought Crosby 'White Christmas,' which by the early seventies had sold 68 million copies in single and LP form. Then his dog-



collar role in 'Going My Way' supplied him with an Oscar, and a vastly popular sequel, 'The Bells of St Mary's.' In the clashing, metallic war decade, Crosby was altogether the ideal palliative: paternal, jocular, decent, unwilling to insist.

His singing was much improved. He had always had the knack of not hectoring the microphone, but in the later thirties, on his own admission, he had sung badly, in a tired voice with 'a lot of frogs.' He had lived a high life, drinking plenty and smoking a pipe. Now he began to have the opposite vocal problem.

He described his own post-war performances as 'self-conscious' and 'over-sung'; and this, no doubt, was at least partly a reaction to the rise and fall of Frank Sinatra, who had taken over Crosby's 'talky' style, made something more assertive and challenging out of it, and then run out of voice altogether.

But in a few years' time, Crosby and Sinatra were back on top again, teaming up for a jolly, pseudo-barbed duet in 'High Society' ('You must be one of the newer fellas,' says Bing.) He had now reached the wig-wearing stage—he endearingly made no secret of such details—and relaxation had spread from the singing to determine the entire style of life. Straw hat and golf clubs were his invariable props from here on. Conspicuous leisure does not charm everyone, but it was hard to begrudge the fun to Crosby, for his enjoyment was itself enjoyable.

He was a very lucky man, a philoprogenitive Catholic with time, room and money to indulge a nature he never needed to change. But it was his personal talent, as well as his professional duty, to share that lucky feeling. As Henry Pleasants has written, 'when we hear Bing Crosby we recognise the voice of an old and treasured friend.' We do; and happily, we still can.

Our good friend is gone and it's so hard to believe. The man who sang us through our school years in his light-hearted manner, through the unhappy war years and right up until his death. Bing always seemed ageless to me and I never really gave too much thought to his 70 some years. Especially in the last few years listening to his new LPs that featured a range and enthusiasm like the Bing of old. I regret that I never had the opportunity to thank him in person for the thousands of hours of pleasure he has given me. May his soul rest in peace.

Ed Driscoll
Burlington, New Jersey

The Ultimate Pop Icon

Bing Remained the Most Unassuming of Institutions

'You could warm your hands on the sound of his voice'

By Tom Shales

BING CROSBY'S reign outlasted all of the heirs apparent. They came, they went, they did or didn't acknowledge what they owed him, but even when Crosby's own popularity softened and his record sales slipped, he remained somehow, somewhere, comfortingly there. He wasn't merely a star, nor merely the greatest star. He was an abiding presence.

You realized what the sound of his voice meant to you when you heard it from a gaudy jukebox in a two-bit bar on that lonely holiday away from home. You heard "White Christmas" and you were home again. You could warm your hands on the sound of his voice. What was wonderful was the way he could inspire sentimental binges without giving in to sentimentality himself. He kept his dignity even when we went to pieces, and his trademarks or habits were statements on the advisability of not getting carried away.

"All I do is, I just do the same old thing every time," Bing Crosby told an interviewer in 1975, "except each time it's a different song." A year later he tried analyzing his style for *The London Times*. "I wanted to sing conversationally, to reach people with the meaning," he said. "I don't think of a song in terms of notes. I try to think of what it purports to say lyrically. That way it sounds more natural, and anything natural is more listenable."

Crosby was more natural and more listenable than any other singer. This was music blithe as friendly chatter, free of bombast or pose, direct and intimate and personal. In liberating songs from pretentious artiness and formal cant, he ironically helped make popular song one of the greatest arts of all, all the greater for its utter accessibility — an art closed to no one. Crosby was a democratizer, an exemplary egalitarian, and he became a singing spokesman as well, a summation of American pop as well as its immaculate practitioner.

In his 50-year career, *The London Times* noted, Crosby's voice was "heard more often by more people than that of any mortal in history."

Yet he remained the most unassuming of institutions. When, during a celebration of his 50th anniversary in show business, he took an unfortunate tumble from a stage in Pasadena last spring, photographers besieged the stage and looked down at Crosby, lying injured in a pit below them. They were asked not to take any photographs of him at that time, and they obliged. Bing Crosby was a head of state; he kept his dignity, and we willingly cooperated in the maintenance of this legend.

Crosby was able to triumph at a stroll, to conquer casually and without looking the aspiring conqueror. There is almost no evidence to support wayward suspicions that his breeziness and nonchalance were fakes; there seems genuine modesty in his decision to title an autobiography, "Call Me Lucky."

You would never have caught him clawing his way into gossip columns or elbowing for attention

on talk shows. He didn't drag his emotional problems through the newspapers, and he didn't posture when he sang emotional songs. Yet he could trigger an emotional response more deftly and efficiently than some performers with their hearts on their sleeves and sobs in their throats.

In the movies, particularly "The Road" pictures he made with Bob Hope, Crosby showed a genuine comedic gift that was relaxed and spontaneous. In an interview last year, Hope recalled that the clowning on the set was so legitimately jolly that, "Guys used to fight to get to work on the pictures." Then Hope sighed nostalgically and said, "God, it was fun."



AP photo

HOPE AND CROSBY IN A SCENE FROM 'THE ROAD TO HONG KONG'

There were vague plans to do one more "Road" picture, to be called "The Road to Tomorrow," but his project never materialized (though Hope said a script had been written), and Crosby once joked that the picture should have been titled "The Road to Oblivion."

Oblivion was and probably always will be quite beyond his grasp.

In "The Country Girl," more than in his priest movies ("Going My Way," "The Bells of St. Mary's"), Crosby proved his abilities as a dramatic actor, though he didn't endanger his acting technique with acting lessons; he hadn't endangered his singing technique with singing lessons, either. But in key moments of "Country Girl," as the alcoholic husband of Grace Kelly, Crosby may have called upon his own early bouts with the bottle in making this portrayal convincing and alarming.

It's easier and more pleasant to remember him romping with Hope, however. This was a public



UPI photo

BING AT CONCORD LAST AUGUST

show-biz friendship that remained entertaining and never grew forced or fatuous. In the "Road" pictures, the jokes were often at Crosby's expense. During one of the films, Hope suddenly hears violins wailing up on the soundtrack. He looks into the camera and says, "Okay folks, you can go out for popcorn, now. He's going to sing again."

One respected Crosby particularly for the things about his life that he kept private. Though he played a priest at least three times in the movies, his Catholicism remained something personal; he never really tried to drag God into the act in self-aggrandizing show-biz style. He didn't tell audiences they were "beautiful" nor congratulate us for having the good taste to love him. He preferred to think he was the fortunate one; he was swinging on a star.

In recent years, after a long period of virtual retirement, Crosby stepped softly back into the spotlight. Sometimes he turned up in unlikely places. When one of his favorite subjects, tequila, was discussed in the rock magazine Rolling Stone, Crosby wrote a friendly letter to the editor disputing few points about his delicacy. It was published and Crosby's signature followed by an editor's note for the disbelieving: "This is the real Bing Crosby."

Late last year, Crosby's career was dissected in, of all forums, The Village Voice, where writer Gary Giddins chastized Crosby somewhat for having forsaken pure jazz in order to occupy the middle-of-the-road, and win over his weeping populist constituency. Then Giddins suggested that Crosby was not only a troubador but an ombudsman. "He reminds me of a line in an old Carl Reiner-Mel Brooks routine about a pop singer who says of his audience, 'I am them, they are me, we are all singing. I have the mouth,'"

Giddins called Crosby "the ultimate pop icon" and concluded "He is us, and we are him, only he has the mouth."

There will probably never be another singer as widely popular as Bing Crosby. Part of the fallout of the media explosion is a fractionalized electorate; the great audience has become many audiences. Where Crosby's influence will end we can never know, however. Whenever a singer tries to speak to us individually, and not to a mob beneath a pedestal, Bing Crosby's legacy will be perpetuated.

"I'll never have a hit again," Crosby once told The Los Angeles Times. "There's no chance. I'll keep on singing as long as there's a market and as long as the voice doesn't alter much. I'd just like to do a job now and keep in touch with the industry. It's been my life for 50 years. It's been a long, long pull and I've had great results. I can't complain if it stops tomorrow."

It stopped on October 14, but he is still us, and we are still him, and we will be for many Christmases to come.

Washington Post

S.F. Sunday Examiner & Chronicle

CROSBY'S APLOMB

A Knack for Knowing How to Enjoy Himself

By Art Rosenbaum
Chronicle Sports Editor

MUCH HAS been said and written of Bing Crosby's one-ness with America. He had a sense of folksy erudition, of friendly aplomb, of being someone above the masses yet a neighbor among them.

Us commoners always marveled that Bing could enjoy a countless number of friends but seem to be just as happy by himself. He knew he was famous and yet he never threw it around. He never let you hold him in awe.

When the mood took him, he'd show up at Bay Meadows, for example, place a few \$10 bets and just as suddenly be on his way. He had been in the horse business since 1937, when he and a partner opened Del Mar near San Diego, and took a teasing for years over the non-winning, nags he and Lin Howard owned, under the title Binglin Stable. There were some upsets. In 1943 a South American import called Don Bingo earned \$27,600 in a big stakes at Belmont and in 1965 Crosby bought an interest in Meadow Court only a few hours before the horse won the Irish Derby.

Eventually he sold his track and horses, but it took a long time. In fact, the last horse he owned, called Tern Unstoned from England, ran one time at Bay Meadows in 1975, was beaten badly, and never raced again. (Not under that unlikely name, anyway.)

★ ★ ★

BING WAS so casual he was confounding. He claimed he was a terrible actor and won the Academy Award only because it was a down year for the movies, but his ability to be his own easy self made picture work go faster and allowed time for the fishing and golf he loved.

In 1950 he was skilled enough to play in the British Amateur where qualification is four-handicap or lower. He won the first three holes of his opening round match with two birdies and a par but finally lost, one up. He drew a larger crowd than all other matches during the rest of the week, and why not? The British were

entranced by his good nature and competitive zeal.

After he lost, he quipped, "The real reason I came here is to get a new wig from the Labor government." Then he doffed his hat to reveal a glistening pate.

He made 13 holes-in-one during his lifetime but only one was publicized until recently. That one was at the picturesque 16th at Cypress Point, 222 yards over the Pacific Ocean, and it had an annual review at Crosby tournament time.

The other aces became publicly known because Bing's friend Tom Rooney, who runs the S.F. Sports & Boat Show, wanted to register Bing's Cypress H-I-O with a British golfing society. Bing wrote back explaining it wasn't such a big deal and besides, he had made a few others around the world.

★ ★ ★

HED GO places alone — just Bing and his pipe — without fear or fanfare. As Guy Cherney observed, "Bing just melted into a crowd. His delight was playing golf with aspiring young stars, just as he did with the three Spanish champions on his ultimate round.

I was involved in arranging a Crosby pairing in the mid-50s. A friend who chaired an international student-exchange charity program decided on a golf exhibition as a money raiser. Two amateur champions, Ken Venturi and Harvie Ward, had already agreed, and the Meadow Club of Marin would give its course and clubhouse, but a Big Name was needed. Would I ask Bing Crosby?

"You're crazy," I said. "I don't know him that well and he's on the road to somewhere and I don't think..."

So there I was, writing a letter to Mr. Crosby at Paramount Studios, Hollywood, explaining the charity, the Venturi-Ward pairing, etc. etc. To our surprise, Bing wrote to say he'd be there — just tell him what time they'd tee off.

★ ★ ★

MY FRIEND did somersaults without a trampoline. A special pre-game lunch and post-game cocktail party was

arranged. "Everybody" would be there. A transportation committee was formed to pick up Mr. Crosby at the airport, or at Pebble Beach or wherever. They'd even send a caddy with the driver and committee person to tell Bing about the course and thus make his round more enjoyable.

Crosby again wrote ... no, all he required was the time of tee-off. So, on the big day, at five minutes before 1 o'clock, he drove up — alone, of course — and after parking, opened the car trunk, put on golf shoes and was about to carry his bag to the first tee when he was recognized.

He was re-introduced to his fellow players and to the very large crowd. They moved through the round and no one could be more charming on the 18th green than Der Bingle as he said, "It's been a picnic knocking the ball around with these young tigers. Enjoyed myself, enjoyed everyone..."

And he was gone. No lunch, no cocktails. All he wanted was a pleasant round of golf.

San Francisco Examiner
October 23, 1977

When Bob Stagnaro phoned us about Bing's death, we didn't want to believe it. We felt it was too soon, that he was still singing great. When Bing was still playing in his golf tournament at Pebble Beach, we watched him pose, golf club in hand, for a small boy to take his picture. The boy snapped one and Bing said "That may not turn out, you had better take another one" and Bing remained posed. Another time at Pebble Beach we watched Bing gather a small boy under his umbrella and walk him down the fairway. He surely loved children and all the world loved Bing.

Mr. & Mrs. A. J. Miller
Santa Cruz, California



I have been a devoted fan of Bing Crosby since I first heard him on the Certified Cremo Cigar radio program. I couldn't believe it! Nobody had ever sung like that. His first sensational popularity took place while I was in Junior High and High School. Those wonderful love songs that he sang surely fit right in with those high school romances. I still get misty when I listen to his old recordings of Please, May I?, Thanks--and all

those other great tunes.

Joseph H. Vance
Lombard, Ill.

CROSBY AT CYPRESS POINT IN THE EARLY 70s
'It's been a picnic . . .

Bob Hope reminisces about days on road with Bing

(The following interview was granted by Bob Hope, the comedian, before the death of his old friend and co-star, Bing Crosby. Hope has said since then that he was numbed by Crosby's death.)

By **ROBERT L. ROSE**
Chicago Daily News

HOLLYWOOD — Bob Hope was laughing. "You know," he said, "I usually make jokes about things I really care about — Presidents, the United States, golf — and Bing Crosby."

This was Monday. The scene was the sunny dining room in Bob Hope's big house, facing the one-hole golf course in the backyard where he keeps in shape. The subject was Hope's new special on TV.

And Bing Crosby. How he met him, how they got the "Road" pictures going, the pranks they played and their friendship.

Crosby and Hope made seven "Road" pictures with Dorothy Lamour. Hope said, winding up the interview, that he was really looking forward to doing just one more — in the spring.

Right now he was working night and day finishing up his two-hour "Bob Hope's Road to Hollywood," with Crosby leading off the first hour, set for Friday, October 28. They were also signed to go to England to do a three-hour special, "America Salutes the Queen," in November.

CROSBY FINISHED his segment of the Hope movie special before he went with his family for a tour in England and his final trip to Madrid.

But Monday, the sun was shining in the huge bay windows and Hope looked out across the green grass where he and his friend had traded jokes and he talked about how it all happened, the Crosby-Hope phenomenon.

"It was back in 1932. We had met once. I think we were coming out of the Friar's Club in New York. A couple of months later, he was singing at the Capitol Theater on Broadway," Hope said, cocking his head and his famous nose and putting his hands behind his neck.

"I was the emcee. I've got a picture of Bing singing at the Capitol then. It's in my projection room, over there, hanging on the wall.

"We were there for two weeks with Abe Lyman and his orchestra. We got to working together and enjoying it."

And it happened, as it happened so often later, with Hope throwing some needling joke, and Crosby bouncing back his own darts?

"OH, YEAH, YES. Oh, sure. I don't know to this day what the jokes were exactly. But I know I was doing the suit jokes. You know, 'That's a nice suit. Keep it. That style is coming back.' Crosby: 'Wait a minute. I got this suit in Pittsburgh.' Hope: 'Where were you at the time?'

"Or, 'Don't take the hanger out. The shoulders look great.' Blah, blah, blah. The people loved it.

"They loved it. I was becoming known on Broadway. I had just finished a show called 'Ballyhoo of 1932' in the 24th Street Theater with Willie and Eugene Howard."

Hope could not resist a little dig. "And Bing was really steaming along. I think he was on the *Cremo Cigar Hour*."

Actually, Crosby had made several pictures and, as Hope noted in his new picture book-biography, "The Road to Hollywood," Crosby was "extremely cordial to a peasant out of vaudeville."

IN THE BOOK, Hope says one of their classic cornball routines included the loudly announced, "Two farmers meeting each other on the street."

"We approached each other from opposite sides of the stage. I pointed my thumbs down and Bing milked them," Hope said.

Next scene: "Two politicians meeting each other on the street." They meet, hail each other, and start picking each other's pockets.

Hope came to Hollywood a few years later, when Bing was already big. Hope's first feature, not as the star, was "The Big Broadcast of 1938," in which he was given "Thanks for the Memory" to sing. It was the song, he said, that kept him in Hollywood.

Then came the first Road picture, "The Road to Singapore," and an association that was to last a lifetime, tickling millions of happy theatergoers. And it would never have happened if it had not been for the chance pairing at the old Capitol Theater.

"**BING WAS** racing his horses at Del Mar. He invited me to the Turf Club Ball the night the track opened. I said sure. I got up to do a little monolog. Bing got up, pitched in, and we did the same act we did at the Capitol seven years before," Hope said. "The audience loved it.

"Some guys from Paramount, where we were both working, said these guys are good. Particularly Bill LeBaron, the production boss. They said we've got to find something for these guys.

"Isn't that funny? They didn't know we'd rehearsed for two weeks in New York seven years before."

Well, Paramount had a picture, sort of.

"I think they called it 'Flight to Singapore,'" Hope said. In the book, he said that the script had been written for George Burns and Gracie Allen. They weren't



Bob Hope

Numbed by death

available, so it was rewritten for Jack Oakie and Fred MacMurray.

Continued on Page 87

Hope Talks About Crosby: In Florence For Benefit

SATURDAY, Nov. 5, 1977 By LEVERNE M. PROSSER
Charleston, S. C. Pee Dee Bureau

FLORENCE — Bob Hope, the man who has made millions around the world laugh, cried a little when his old friend Bing Crosby died from a heart attack after collapsing on a golf course in Spain.

The crying is over.

Hope, who was in Florence earlier in the week to do a benefit for the Pee Dee Speech and Hearing Center, said as long as the blue of the night meets the gold of the day, Crosby's presence will remain.

"I miss him. We all do. Without him the world is a little shabbier. We traveled a lot of roads together and it won't be easy or nearly as much fun traveling the rest of them without him," Hope said.

Hope said the world lost a giant when Crosby died.

"He left a void that can never be filled. His passing left us all a little poorer," Hope said.

Hope said Crosby also left the world a lot richer.

"Bing touched more people in the world than any other performer who ever lived. Through his motion pictures and his songs, he lit a candle in the lives of many that will never burn out," Hope said.

Hope said he never heard Bing say an unkind word about any other performer and that every note he sang was a happy one. His casual manner was his way of sharing his happiness with all of us.

"I kidded Bing about his golf, his singing, his kids, his clothes and his Oscar. But that's my business as a comedian. I had the greatest respect and admiration for him," Hope said.

Hope said Bing deserved his Oscar.

"In my book, anyone who can go from the 'Road' pictures we did to 'The Country Girl' and 'Going My Way,' rates a lot of Oscars," Hope said.

Hope said Bing had that intangible, rare quality among performers called class, the difference between lead and pure gold.

"You can't buy it, you can't rent it or steal it. It's God's gift, and Bing was the epitome of class," Hope said.

Hope met Crosby in 1932, and they became friends when they did two weeks together at the Capitol Theater in New York City. Recently, the two of them agreed — after 45 years of warm friendship — to do another "Road" picture in England. It would have been their eighth movie together.

The two of them planned to work together on a tribute to Queen Elizabeth on Nov. 21 and Bing was going to introduce Hope on a TV special. Bing, his wife Kathryn and their three teen-aged children did tape the family's annual Christmas show just a few days before his death.

"White Christmas" and "Silent Night" were among Crosby's biggest hits and Hope once cracked that he was the man who owned Christmas.

Hope said it is only fitting that the songs were and will remain Christmas favorites, for Christmas represents the spirit of giving. Thanks to his records, Crosby's inimitable voice will be around as long as there is a Christmas. No performer brought us more joy than Bing, he said.

Hope said Crosby had boundless warmth, sincerity and a passion for life. He also enjoyed a good laugh and he knew that Hope's jokes about him were all written and delivered with affection.



Staff Photo

Hope On Florence Golf Course

Just three days before he died of a heart attack on a golf course in Spain, Bing Crosby talked to MIDNIGHT/GLOBE during a stopover in London. It was a long, casual interview — as casual as the great star himself.

Tragically, it turned out to be Bing's last interview.

Bing was looking forward to a productive quarter-century-to-come as he sat comfortably in his Mayfair House rooms in London. "I've got enough good singing and acting in me to make it till 100," he told MIDNIGHT/GLOBE.

"I just finished a series of concerts here, and it made me feel like a young man again. Well, around 50, anyway," he said chuckling.

"And I'm tickled pink at the prospect of getting back into movies. You know, I've got another 'Road' picture coming up. It'll be the seventh — and best.

"But singing and acting are going to be the fuel for getting me to the 100 mark. The fun — the fun I'll feel deep in my heart — will come from another source.

"That's my kids. They're growing up, and there's no greater pleasure in life than for a father to see his kids branching out and developing into strong, independent personalities.

"Sure, I'm hoping they'll make it big in whatever way they wish. But that'll be just icing for the cake. So by the time I'm 100, I wouldn't kick if Mary Frances turned out to be as good an actress as Grace Kelly.

"Or if Nathaniel, who's a whiz with the golf stick, became another Jack Nicklaus. Or even if Harry" — and here Bing smiled and went into one of his patented bubba-bubba-boos — "if Harry got to be a better singer than yours truly."

Bing's eyes twinkled as he spoke of his children — the children of his second marriage. Harry Lillis III is 19, Mary Frances, 18, and Nathaniel Patrick, 16.

"Whatever careers they want to make for themselves in show business, that's their affair," Bing went on. "But shaping their character, that's my business. And that's one thing I've never taken lightly.

"I've always laid down the law for them. I won't have any of them sloppily dressed. No scruffiness, ever. And no profanity, not in my house. They never heard their mother or me use profane language. And up to now, knock wood, I've never heard them use it either.

"They've never answered me back, either. Probably because I've always made it plain that if any of 'em did, I'd belt him. You can see from their unscarred faces — I've never had occasion to unleash my Sunday punch.

"They're great kids."

How about the sexual revolution that so many young people are caught up in, MIDNIGHT/GLOBE asked Bing. Has it touched your children?

"I really don't think it has," he replied. "I was raised as a Catholic, married as a Catholic and the Good Lord willing, I've raised my children in a strictly moral way.

"Take the matter of living together. If Harry were to come up to me and say he was living with a girlfriend, I'd tell him to clear out of my house immediately.

"Harry knows that. Just as he knows that doing wrong must always have its consequences. Same with Mary Frances. I reared her with a respect for sex, which is the reason she's not about to take up a loose lifestyle.

"That's always been my way of living, and it's the kids', too."

Were the results as good with his four older sons — Gary, now 43, twins Dennis and Philip, 41, and Lindsay, 39 — the children of his first marriage to Dixie Lee who died in 1952.

Bing tugged at one of his jutting ears and looked pained. "It's hard to say. They seem to have straightened out a lot in the last five years.

BING'S LAST INTERVIEW

In this exclusive interview — 3 days before his death — Bing Crosby talks about...

- Why I'd like to live to be 100
- No explicit movies for my kids
- TV is too dirty for me
- My wonderful life with Kathryn
- My hopes for my kids

By LEON FREILICH

"The boys had their problems. That's not uncommon when you set your sights on something and it doesn't materialize."

"After they finished school, they put an act together and took it on the road to see who'd applaud. But they started quarreling — with their agents, with their nightclub employers, even with themselves.

"That sort of soured them on life in general. Then, their marriages to Lela, Vegas chorus girls flopped, so they had domestic problems as well.

"The boys sure had some troublesome years. But I think everything's working out for the best now."

Then Bing swung to the subject of his own work. "I can't tell you how excited I am to be going back on 'The Road' again.

"It'll be Bob Hope and Dottie Lamour and me, like old times again. The idea of the new picture is that Hope and I stumble on the secret of the fountain of youth. Everybody in the movie will get to be young again.

"It will be called, naturally, 'The

Road to the Fountain of Youth,' and we'll have a young actress playing Dottie in a sarong looking like she used to, 30 years ago. And we'll probably have clips of her from some of the old Road movies."

Even Mae West will join them, Bing added with a grin.

"She'll get to grow younger, too. We'll find a girl to play her as a youth. But Hope and I... well, we stay old.

"The secret doesn't work for us," he said and sat back in his chair and roared.

Then he grew serious. "Aside from the fun the movie's going to provide people, Hope and I have another aim in

going into this. We want to prove that good wholesome movies are what people are really longing for today.

"I'm terribly upset and disappointed with the permissiveness and sex and violence in the current movies and TV programs. That sort of stuff is turning off people by the millions.

"Certainly, speaking for myself, I've never allowed my children to patronize any theater that's showing an explicit film. If there's dirt in the world, that's no reason to wallow in it.

"Anyway, my kids would be embarrassed by movies of that ilk. I can see that at home. They blush when something dirty is presented on television.

"But not for long. Someone, usually it's young Nathaniel, lunges for the tube and darkens it. The housekeeper takes care that there's no dust on the TV, and my kids make sure there's no dirt, either."

Thoughts of his San Francisco home prompted Bing to talk about Kathryn, his wife of nearly 20 years.

"God, I miss her," he said. "But she hosts a talk show on television, and even though she wanted to accompany me here to Europe, I insisted she keep working.

"Kathryn's a superb actress and I want her to keep her hand in show business. But I also want to keep her happy — that's why I bought her this present for our 20th anniversary."

Bing held up a gaily wrapped package. "I won't tell you what it is. Kathryn has to be the first to find out. Can you wait a couple of weeks?"

But he did tell MIDNIGHT/GLOBE that he bought Kathryn a new wedding ring shortly before he left for Europe. "She's been satisfied all these years with a \$7 ring I gave her the night we eloped," he said.

"It was about time for an upgrading, I thought. So I went and spent some of the Crosby millions on a bigger and better ring. I must be a good bargainer, because I paid \$28 for it."

"And I told Kathryn. I wouldn't want her to think I'm a cheapskate."

Bing recalled how he ran off with Kathryn to Las Vegas. She was 21 at the time; Bing's son Gary was 20.

"We'd been going together for three years," he said, "and three times we'd picked a date for a wedding. Three times we'd called it off. I guess it was my fault."

"I was scared. Scared of what my kids would say about marrying someone so young. Scared that I wasn't the right man for a young actress on the rise."

"But finally I'd had enough of putting it off. I wrote Kathryn a letter, a simple letter, asking for her hand. She accepted, and before either of us could change our minds, we were standing in St. Ann's Roman Catholic Chapel taking our vows."

"It hasn't been all peaches and cream. Don't let anybody tell you that. But I've savored every moment of it."

"We took a marriage that everybody said 20 years ago would fall flat on its face, and we made it stand up strong. Because no matter what else was happening, Kathryn and I were sharing a lot of loving. That's been our bond."

Bing's always been delighted that his three youngest children resemble their mother so strongly. "I wouldn't have it any other way," he said, working his forehead up and down and his ears back and forth.

"This way, they're talented AND attractive," he grinned. "That helps especially for Mary Frances, who's studying in school to be an actress, and for Harry, who's preparing to go into the music field."

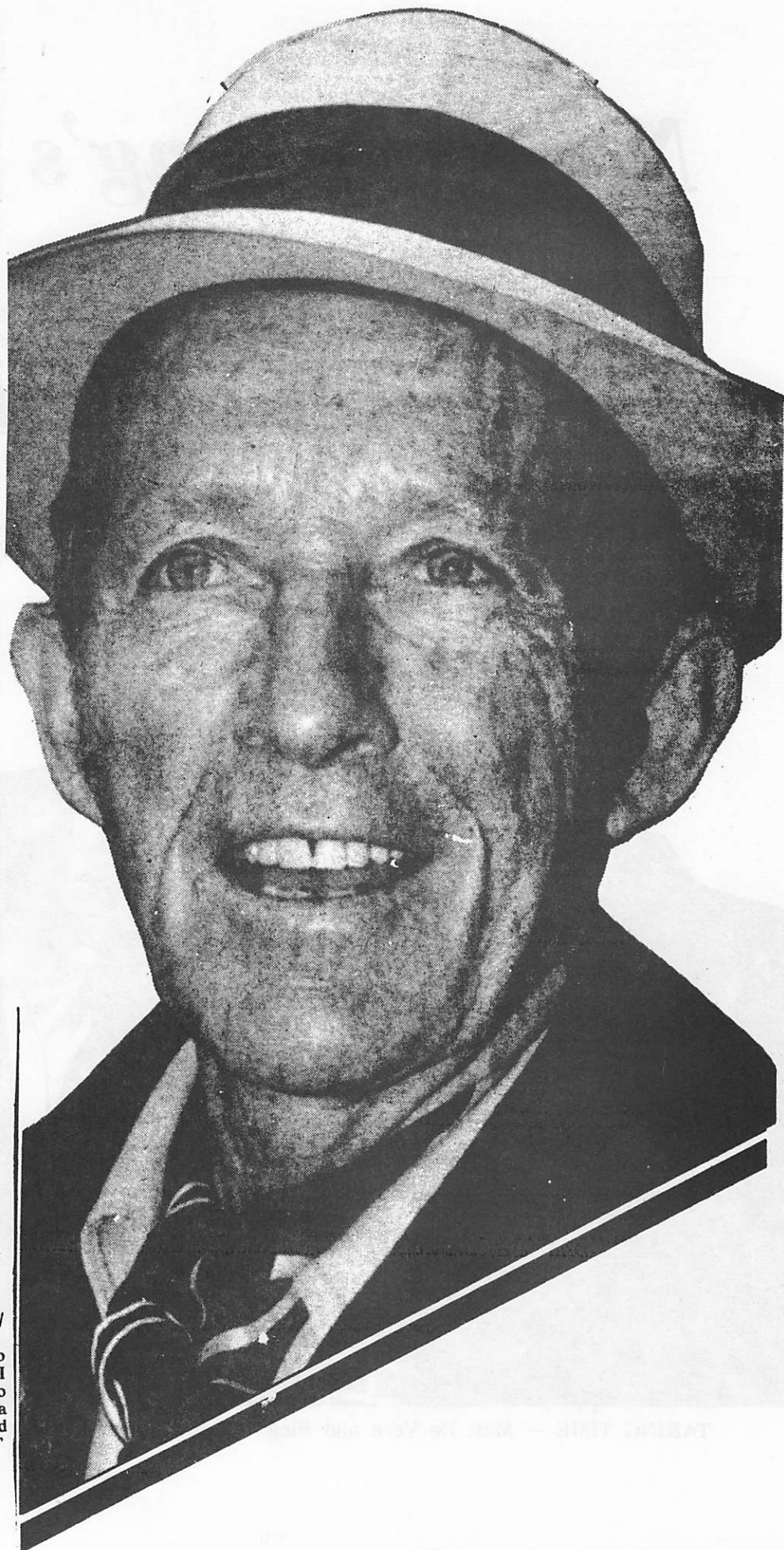
"Nathaniel hopes to be a golfer. He already matches me stroke for stroke on the course, so I can foresee a future for him as the handsome, golfing Crosby of the family."

What about the distant future, when he'd play "The Road to Heaven"? It turned out to be not so distant — only three days away. How did he want

people to remember him?

This is what Bing told MIDNIGHT/GLOBE:

"When I'm gone? I'd like people to go on enjoying my records and the films I made. But most of all, I'd want them to remember me as a man who brought up a good family — two good families — and tried to set a good example for them."



Now that Bing's gone,

DAILY LEDGER, Antioch, Calif.-
Sunday, October 23, 1977

no screen idols left



TAKING TIME — Matt De Vera and Bing Crosby interrupt a chat for a photographer.

By ED REMITZ
Staff Writer

Matt DeVera's den is nearly wallpapered with autographed photos of politicians and entertainers.

Collecting them is his hobby.

But now, since the death of Bing Crosby, he says no one is left.

"It's the worst about Bing because I got to know him," says De Vera, 60, an Antioch resident.

Since 1962, De Vera had corresponded with Crosby.

They were simple letters of praise — fan letters. Or notes of condolences when death or illness struck the singer's family, cards of congratulations for birthdays and other happy events. And requests for old records.

In early 1962, De Vera asked Crosby for a personal item, a souvenir.

Later that year, he received a Dunhill pipe Crosby smoked in the 1954 movie "White Christmas."

Around the pipe's stem is a 14-karat gold band with "Bing" engraved on it.

"I didn't tell anybody I

asked for a souvenir, not even my wife," De Vera says. "I didn't know if he'd answer so I wanted to avoid embarrassment. But then the pipe came."

De Vera doesn't play golf but in 1967 he began attending the annual Crosby Open Golf Tournament in Pebble Beach.

"I wanted to meet Bing but I never thought it would happen," De Vera says.

But De Vera did catch-up with Crosby that year on the 18th hole.

"I walked over, smoking the pipe he gave me and introduced myself," De Vera says. "You know, I was kinda nervous. A thrill all of a sudden after so many years to be standing there talking to him."

It was Crosby's casual elegance that impressed De Vera.

"Somethin' rare," he says. "But he always gave me the time. Whenever I wanted to take a picture or say hello, Bing always made the time."

De Vera's collection of letters from Crosby are short but personal.

Many answer De Vera's

questions about hard-to-find records or simply say thanks for a compliment.

The letters are typed by a secretary.

All begin with "Dear Matt ..." except for one beginning "Mr. De Vera ..."

Crosby signed that letter, crossed-out the original salutation and wrote "Matt ..."

De Vera also corresponded with Bing's wife Kathryn. Some of her notes are handwritten.

"You see," De Vera says, "it's just like the kids with Elvis Presley. I've been a Crosby fan 46 years, since I was a teenager."

"All the young guys loved Bing," he adds. "But there was something about me that was extra. I was just one of the stronger fans. I couldn't walk past a juke box without playing his records."

De Vera figures he has at least 350 single records by Crosby, whom he terms "The Old Master." And he has more than 15 albums and a dozen tapes.

Then there are the half-dozen photo albums with

Club mourns as recording of dead star is played

By CORINNA HONAN

BING CROSBY fans from the North-East bowed their heads in silence yesterday — and heard their idol speak to them.

They had travelled to Leeds to join hundreds of fans for the International Crosby Circle convention.

"I send you all my kind regards and wish you a happy Christmas and New Year," said Bing in a two-minute recording, taped for the club the day before his death.

It was a particularly poignant moment for the Wallsend man who founded the circle 12 years ago and met Bing every time he came to Britain.

shots he has taken or collected during his dozen or more meetings with the crooner since 1967.

De Vera, a retired Fibre-board machine operator, is also a CB radio operator. His "handle" is Bingo Man.

He was the subject of an article in the May 25 Daily Ledger, soon after actress Joan Crawford's death.

An ardent fan of Crawford's, he had carried on a similar correspondence with her, but he never met the glamorous star.

Now both his idols are gone.

"I hear Bing's music now and I almost get tears," he says.

But there is a cheering story.

De Vera says, "We were walking along at Pebble Beach and Bing began whistling," De Vera says.

"I recognized the tune so I said, 'Haven't I heard that before?' Bing just looked at me and said, 'So have I, Matt. So have I.'"

My Life With Bing

By Kathy Crosby

"I've had a marvelous life, because I've been loved by a man that I love very much..." Kathy Crosby speaking. Bing Crosby's wife. Not uttering a careful tribute to the dead, when perspectives of distance lend enhancement.

But talking joyously about a here-and-now living husband, backstage at a theater in San Francisco when I interviewed her for *MIDNIGHT/GLOBE*. It was a few weeks ago. Bing at 74 was in vigorous good health, looking forward to another quarter-century or so. As far as he could tell.

Now with Bing dead and buried, some of what Kathy told me sounds startlingly like a summing up, a totaling of the score of their life and love together.

"Bing is an ageless person and a marvelous husband," she insisted. It wasn't the public figure, the beloved entertainer, that entranced her.

"Reputation..." she mused. "You cannot sleep with a reputation. You sleep with a man. It comes down to that. You've got to squeeze his orange juice in the morning."

"It's been super, being together each day... and that's what marriage should be."

She was 30 years younger. Bing had been married, and lost his wife, and had four sons close to Kathy's own age. All that gave him qualms about the courtship.

"Bing was careful," she remembered. "We had the longest courtship in history. It lasted four years. He said, 'I'm going to ask you a question — when I know what the answer will be.' We played around with that for quite a while. You can't say 'yes' until he asks, 'Will you marry me?'"

There was a year she separated herself from him altogether. "I think we had gone as far as we could go," said Kathy. "I felt, if we weren't going to get married we shouldn't date."

Amazing interview just before the crooner's death

By LAURA DENI, *GLOBE* Contributing Editor



midnight globe
November 15, 1977

'It's been super being together each day'

And just about the time she learned to get along without him, and pursued her own career, Bing found he couldn't live without her.

They arranged a meeting in Las Vegas. "His driver picked me up, saying, 'Happy the bride the sun shines on...' I panicked!" Kathy smiled. "We went to the courthouse and then down the street to St. Anne's Catholic Church..."

The marriage lasted 20 years.

"I was so young and dumb," Kathy said, looking back on the girl she used to be. "I thought I was marvelous! It never occurred to me that I wouldn't suit Bing very well."

But she learned. "Bing is a hunter and I learned to handle a gun. I'm a pretty good duck shot and a very good quail shot. I can't fish very well because I'm not patient with a dry fly. I can get one on a spinner, every cast."

"I'm a country girl — which is what he likes. I can't stay awake for

the bright lights. He'd had all the bright lights he needed. So the things we did were taking walks, reading together, playing a vicious game of Scrabble, traveling... we've always gotten along very well."

She never felt she had married a status symbol. "I loved the man," she emphasized, "from the beginning."

"She never tried to put on a mother act with his first family, nor make a special effort toward Bing's mother. 'She was about 85 at the time. We became the closest of friends because I genuinely care for older people. She died at 92. I've never had a closer friend.'"

Something happened that eased her relationship with the boys. "Gary is one year older than I am," she noted. "The twins, Dennis and Phillip, are just a year or two younger. Lindsay is only five or six years younger. But a little while after Bing and I got married, the boys got married. They all married beautiful girls who got pregnant right away."

"All of the children were born, and it was, 'How do you handle

colic?' and 'What are your problems?' and we were all having picnics in the backyard every Sunday. It was very nice. We were all producing children at the same time. Nobody can dislike a baby."

What held them bound together. "A lot of love, and the kids, and lately a lot of distance," she thought. "We've always been going off somewhere. He's going off and sometimes he wants me along and sometimes he doesn't. It's all right. I want him to have as much freedom, as much lovely life, as he can..."

Now Bing has taken the last road, alone.

His will leaves Kathy and the three children she gave him well provided for, as well as Bing's four older sons. The size of the estate, rumored at as much as \$700 million, has not been disclosed.

The will provided for a "private" funeral, a wish that was followed with only family and one or two friends present. "Bing feels so strongly about funerals," Kathy had told me, "he can hardly make himself go to one..."

It really is the end of an era. But we've had the privilege of living that era to its last minute and we'll keep the echo of Bing's voice forever and ever in our hearts. Bing is HERE among us and will ever be - he's still "Going His Way," taking us "Where the Blue of the Night Meets the Gold of the Day." So long, Bing, see you soon.

Pierre Bugnot
Marseille, France

For 47-year-old Frank Murphy it was the last message from the warmhearted star, who has sent the Murphy family a personal greeting every Christmas for the last 15 years.

"It was a very, very special moment. We were all very conscious of the fact he had died the day after making the tape. There were no hysterical outbursts — you could have heard a pin drop," said Frank, of Ferndale Avenue.

"But this convention is not a memorial service for Bing. He would not have wanted a wake. We are playing his records, seeing slides, short films and a film of him on the golf course. The show must go on."

Frank, who has been a fan of the "Old Groaner" since he was a child, is one of many who feel they have lost not only a hero, but a personal friend.

Ever since his 22-year-old daughter Angela can remember, there has been a "Bing Room" in the house, stacked with pictures, scrap books and about 4,000 Crosby records and tapes. She knows when her father has returned from work as a bingo hall manager in Morpeth, because he always puts on a Bing record as soon as he gets in.

Upset

Frank said: "I say this unashamedly. I lost my mother and father over the last few years. I was very upset, but I didn't cry. But I cried the day Bing died."

"I feel I have lost a member of the family. I have been playing some of his records since he died. But I've had to take some off, because I couldn't bear it."

"I had seen him just less than a week before, in his dressing room at the Palladium, when he gave me a leather case, inscribed with a golf motif, as a souvenir of his coming golf tournament. He looked terrific and he gave a wonderful performance. I just couldn't take in news of his death. It was unbelievable."



Angela Murphy listens to tapes in her father's Bing Crosby Room.



(Times Photo by Mike Spinelli)

'I'VE IDOLIZED BING'

Priscilla Koernig, who first met Bing Crosby 30 years ago when she was a student at San Mateo High School, displays a recent oil painting of her

favorite man, done by artist Frank Coram in England, amid the collection of Crosby mementos in "The Crosby Room" of her home.

Bing's Fan Club To Keep The Faith

By GEORGE GOLDING
"I've idolized Bing ever since I can remember," says Priscilla J. Koernig of San Mateo, "and fortunately he knew my name and was very cordial to me."

Miss Koernig has devoted a room of her mid-San Mateo home to Crosby's memory.

She is vice president and

treasurer of Club Crosby, and has a collection of letters from him, dating back 20 years.

There also are scores of autographed photographs, record jackets and albums, and sheet music personally inscribed.

"The first time I saw Bing in person was Oct. 7, 1948 at San Mateo High School when he came to see

his son, Gary, play on the Bellarmine High School football team," she says.

In the Crosby memorial room is a photograph of that event—Bing watching the frosh-soph game at San Mateo High, and student Priscilla Koernig sitting two rows behind.

She already had been corresponding with Crosby for a year.

"They started out 'Dear Miss Koernig,' but after a couple of years read 'Dear Priscilla.'"

She has received Christmas cards from the Crosbys for many years, and has visited the Crosby

—San Mateo R THE TIMES Wednesday, Nov. 2, 1977





Bing's Fans to Continue

(Continued from Page 1)
home in Hillsborough and his ranch in Northern California.

Each year at Christmas, she and other leaders of Club Crosby joined the family in providing the concert for elder citizens at Laguna Honda, and Priscilla has even appeared on a television show with the Crosbys.

Her name has been mentioned on Crosby record jackets as the person to

contact for fan club information, and she wrote a comment for the jacket of his recent "Happy Holidays" album.

"What is Christmas without Bing Crosby?" the note asks. "It just wouldn't be the same. Bing Crosby and Christmas are as much a part of the American scene as baseball, hot dogs and Mom's apple pie."

Amid her collection of Crosby golfing hats, a golf club of his, a shirt with his

name embroidered on the chest, her bumper stickers and posters and photographs and letters, Priscilla Koernig now contemplates such a Christmas.

"Bing Crosby will never be gone," she says. "His voice, through recordings and films, will live on with us forever."

Club Crosby, she reports, has been active for 40 years and "we're still going to try to continue."

As a former president of the club, an office now held by close friend Patricia Sullivan, she plans to be active in keeping the group together.

She and Patricia and other members will continue to publish the twice yearly 78-page "Bingang" newsletter, and will continue writing letters to other members around the world and exchanging tapes of interviews he took part in, with the club.

Bing Crosby: a view of vocation

The death of Bing Crosby last week has inspired many written testimonies to his contribution to American music and film culture, as well as to his personal qualities of gentleness and quiet manner. Despite the atmosphere of notoriety he was able to live a good family life and keep his faith in something other than booking agents and advertising managers.

I wonder how many vocations were nurtured along by his portrayal of the priest in *Going My Way* and *The Bells of St. Mary's*. The halcyon days pictured in these

movies were probably just the thing young minds needed to set them thinking about such a life. And not only the life of the priest, but also the nuns that were portrayed in these films.

Some cynically look back upon these movies to sneer at their simplicity and sentimentality. But young minds in whom God has already planted a seed of vocation don't need the rigors of identity crises and protests — not at that age. They need ideals and heroes.

Characteristics of gentleness and understanding, of humor and a deep faith in both God and people were simply and well presented. Though times have changed and some of the life-style has changed, these qualities are enduring and, most of all, endearing. These films came along when vocation numbers were at their highest. Whether or not such portrayals made any contribution may never be known; at least they did nothing to turn youthful minds away.

As a vocation matures there will be plenty of time to learn the problems. Identity crises and protests

against the system are not major problems for most of us. Like all professions, our problems too are how we can best give personal service and make the best use of what the system has to offer.

If all the people a priest or nun has to deal with are not as lovely as those Bing dealt with, if they all do not come out as well as they did in the films—so what else is new? But it's nice to encourage young minds that there is always hope and many of the problems will come out all right. Why else would anyone choose a vocation unless there is that hope? Few professions have had a man like Bing Crosby present their ideals as hopefully.

Going My Way and *The Bells of St. Mary's* have for years provided holiday TV entertainment. The simplicity of presentation may just be what young minds need to help them along in their search for vocation.

Along with our prayers for the man, we might also thank God for his gentle reminder of the simplicity of service and the peace of soul it can bring. In our complex world we need to be reminded quite often.

BEC

How does one explain, in mere words, our affection for Bing and the many years of happiness and enjoyment he provided, especially for us, his most ardent devotees? Our deepest regret is that it appeared certain at last after waiting for a lifetime, "the master" was to grace our shores for certain during March '78, but God willed otherwise and took one of his most faithful sons. In retrospect, it now appears that it was an ideal time for Bing to be called "home." He had just completed another outstanding fortnight at the Palladium and during his last hours on earth had successfully participated in a final round of his beloved golf.

Kevin Sheather

Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

I think I must have been amongst the last fans to meet Bing. I'd never had the opportunity to meet him and shake his hand until the final Saturday at the Palladium, just 6 days before his death. Largely through Frank Murphy, whom I was with, I managed to get into Bing's dressing room just 10 minutes before the show. We spoke briefly and Bing was everything I'd always expected. Those 10 minutes were the culmination of 10 years interest in Bing for me (I'm still "only" 23) and I really couldn't describe the thrill after having so many "near misses." It really seems as if fate stepped in to let me achieve my ambition. Bing had a marvelous life and lived it to the full. He achieved more, did more, and saw more probably than any other human being ever has (after all, until the 20th century, world wide fame and world travel was impossible) We shouldn't mourn Bing, rather we should enjoy his marvelous legacy — for there is no doubt that is all he would wish.

Ken Crossland

Ossett, England

On the eve of Bing Crosby's tour, pianist Joe Bushkin talks to Max Jones

"THIS whole thing started with that Christmas TV show with Bing Crosby and Fred Astaire. It was one afternoon in the studio when things got a little out of control. There was some problem about lighting and we weren't getting too many takes in."

Joe Bushkin, the famed jazz pianist whose quartet is back in Britain to play a few dates and the London Palladium season with Bing Crosby's show, was talking in his hotel room about how he and the indestructible Crosby got together again.

"It was a big set and there was a lot of running about in an attempt to get this show on the road, and the whole thing began to remind me of Groucho Marx," Joe remembered.

"It was a tremendous comedy except that a fortune was being wasted for Bing's company, while a couple of jerks were trying to change a baby spot into a pin spot, or whatever the hell it was. There was a lot of technical dialogue and not much action going on."

"I was getting tired of standing around. I'd drunk about 30 cups of coffee and was getting a little acidity problem, and I figured the best way for me to waste some more time was to just go up and play some piano."

"Where I had to play was supposedly in Bing's music room at his home. There were steps up to the piano and back of it a library of records and tape machines and so forth. That was the scene. So I sat down and started to play 'Wrap Your Troubles In Dreams.'"

"I don't know why I went into that, but subconsciously I did it in a key where it lay well for him. He sings it around C, D flat or something."

"Bing was at the back getting a cup of tea, and he came walking up with this paper cup of tea in his hand and stood by the piano. I was into the middle part of the tune and he starts singing, and all the noise stopped in the studio because he was just singing softly, you know, with the piano."



BING CROSBY: 'one of the guys in the band, like any guy doing a solo. He's no different than Bunny Berigan was playing solo trumpet. He'll go anywhere in the world with this quartet.' Inset: **JOE BUSHKIN.**

Bushkin on Bing

"So I went from 'Wrap Your Troubles' to 'I Surrender, Dear,' and a bunch of tunes like 'Please,' that he dug, and he went on singing. And, next thing you know, his wife, Kathryn, and the kids came over and sat on the steps. The studio men got the lights straight, and now they're ready to shoot the scene, and Bing is going to keep the medley going. Now he's throwing tunes at me."

"And while I'm playing piano during this lighting panic, Bing asks me if I'd like to bring a quartet up to the Pebble Beach, Pro-Am, which is the biggest golf tournament in the United States."

"He said he hadn't sung a tune at his own Pro-Am Celebrity Tournament in eight years. He'd get up and talk, and so on, but apparently hadn't sung a song at his own thing in all that time. And this year (1975) he was going to do a medley of 35 tunes."

"And that was the whole show. We opened with a number, and Bing got up and sang about 30 songs, which absolutely clobbered 800 of these great golfers. Fractured 'em. Then Bing said we had to do a concert with this thing, you know. So we got the family together, because they had the material from the various shows that they did; the orchestrations were already written, practically, and he got Nelson Riddle, Rosemary Clooney, and my quartet with Herb Ellis on guitar. And we had a show."

"And I must say this: with the music I love playing, I'll do it for nothing or get paid. With Bing I'm getting paid and I really enjoy being with

the guy. It's a kick, and everything has been first class."

BUSHKIN, as I have tried to imply, feels an almost unlimited admiration for Crosby, whose skill and professionalism for music he finds stimulating and endearing. Bing, I noted on the last Palladium visit, occasionally looked surprised or amused at what Bushkin (or maybe Johnny Smith) was playing during the medley.

"Well, yeah, right. We used to change it every show, and we threw him a couple of times. But he loved it. He said: 'Throw some curves.' He's like Babe Ruth, man; he loves a fast ball or a curve or something unexpected."

"Bing is absolutely one of the guys in the band, like any guy doing a solo. He's no different than Bunny Berigan was playing solo trumpet. Consequently I enjoy every minute of it, and I'm sure he does. He'll go anywhere in the world with this quartet."

"In fact, what's come up is to just go out with the quartet. It's such an easy thing. We can travel in two cars; all we need is a van for the amplifier and the drum set.

"And Bing would love to be in the same automobile as the quartet, so we could be talking about jazz musicians and old times. When I did that Christmas show with him and Fred Astaire, that was the Bing Crosby Projects, his company, that's paying for it. Yet he was hanging up shooting in order to ask me about the guys.

"He asked me about Bobby Hackett, when I saw him last, and so forth, and we talked about all the cats he knew. That's his thing, you know. He reminisced a lot about Jack Teagarden, of course, and Condon. He loved Eddie Condon."

I said Bing had always been a singer who appreciated superior jazzmen, players such as Louis Armstrong, Eddie Lang, Joe Sullivan, and the Dorseys, and loved working with groups like Bob Crosby's Bob Cats. Joe put it to me that Bing just preferred good musicians, a preference which should not surprise us.

"He always asked for us on the record dates when we were session men, and that's natural, isn't it? I mean, if you have a choice of hanging out with Broadway Rose or Sophia Loren I think you're going to take Sophia.

"Most good singers feel that way. Tom Jones wouldn't make a move without Jack Parnell on his TV

show, would he? And as a matter of fact, when I was over here in 1970 I went out with Phil Harris to the studio to see Jack and the guys, and noticed they were all the great players — Stan Roderick, Bobby Orr and many old-

time players who'd worked with Ted Heath and the Palladium band, and so on.

"And Tom Jones, in the States at the height of his popularity, was considered a big pop-rock guy, and I figured he'd have a bunch of

kids behind him. But when I mentioned it, he said: 'Look, when that red light's on and you want those notes you don't get no young kids; you get the guys who can play, you get the pros'."

I WONDERED when and how the Crosby-Bushkin association began, and Joe said that the Crosby connection went way back to when he recorded with the singer.

"I made a lot of records with him. I did recordings with him when I was with Tommy Dorsey's band in '40 and '41, and then when I was a studio piano player after the war — you know, I was staff pianist in early 1946 — Bing called in and he got Eddie Condon, Bud Freeman, George Wettling and myself, and a bunch of guys he specified for a record date at Decca. He did 'Personality' with me and some other tunes.

"And I played piano for Bing as far back as 1940 on the Road To Morocco soundtrack. That's when Dorsey's band was on the West Coast, and we played at the Palladium in Hollywood. Bing wanted Tommy's band to be on the main title track of the picture, which had Victor Young's orchestra, so it was really quite a scene.

"This was an immense studio with a big symphony orchestra, Victor Young's, and the Tommy Dorsey band, and man there were some sounds going on.

"Anyway, Bing dug my playing. He picked up on it right away; I guess it reminded him of whatever piano playing he liked to hear. So I got to know him real well around that time.

"At that period I began writing songs: 'Oh, Look At Me Now,' 'How Do You Do Without Me,' a lot of songs for the Dorsey orchestra, and through this activity I got to know a lot of the songwriters and publishers."

A lover of well-constructed songs, he is still into composing. He's not too keen on the protest-song genre, though, as he has never seen songs as a weapon.

"I'm not one of those cats who believes in asking, when told that such and such a singer is a very good act: 'Never mind that, can he march?'"

Continued from Page 75

That didn't work out, either.

"So the picture was handed to Bing and me and Dotty," Hope said.

"Well, we tore it apart. I had my radio staff, the greatest comedy writing staff ever put together anywhere — Norman Panama, Melvin Frank, and Milt Josefburg, Mel Shavelson, Jack Douglas, Jack Rose — 13 of the greatest.

"Today, they're producers, directors. But I gave them the scripts and said, 'Hey, throw some stuff in there.' And they'd bring it to me, I'd take it to Paramount, call Bing in and say, 'What do you think of this? Let's do this.' Jokes and stuff.

"HE'D SAY, 'YEAHHH. That

sounds like fun. Let's do it!'"

"And once you got on the set you knew it was working. Everybody on the set, the light guys and all the grips, they all laughed, and when you hear those guys laugh, well, they're tough and they knew.

"The director, Victor Schertzinger, he was a class director. He wasn't really for all this hokey kind of stuff. He said, 'I don't know what I'm doing. All I have to do is say, 'Stop' and 'Start.' But it came out right on film.

"We kept throwing in this garbage and it worked. We went on to make seven of them. And we're going to make another one..."

And, oh, some of that beautiful hokey stuff:

— At the close of "Road to

Bali," Crosby strides off with two girls, Dorothy Lamour and Jane Russell, and Hope begs, "What are you going to do with two girls?" Crosby says smugly, "That's my problem," and Hope vainly tries to halt the "The end" sign, "Call the producer... Call the writers!"

— In "Road to Zanzibar" — as Fearless Frazier, the Living Bullet, about to be shot from a cannon — Hope demands of his blond assistant, "Where were you last night?" "With my grandmother." "Yeah? Well, your grandmother got in bed with me last night and he had lip rouge on his collar."

— At the end of the "Road to Utopia," Hope finally wins the girl when a crack in the icepack se-

parates Bing on one side and "Dotty and me on the other."

Years later, Dotty and I are long married when Bing pays us a visit. We introduce our son, who turns out to look exactly like Bing."

— Hope rescues Virginia Mayo in "The Princess and the Pirate," only to see her choose a common seaman, Crosby in a bit part, as her husband. "How do you like that!" Hope fumes. "I knock my brains out for nine reels and some bit player from Paramount comes over and gets the girl!"

The interview was over. The reporter walked to the door, and Hope was singing, to himself, moderately loud:

"Thanks for the memory..."

'We didn't care about anyone else'

Wednesday November 2, 1977 The Daily Illini

Fans with a passion recall 40 years of Bing

by Jeff Drumtra
staff writer

In the week following Bing Crosby's death, Phil and Dorothy Smith did not play a single Crosby song on their home tape player. Which is unusual: Dorothy Smith can barely remember a quiet evening at home in the past decade when Bing's rich silk voice didn't resonate in her ears or melt her ballad-loving heart.

The Smiths, who live at 710 S. Lynn Street in Champaign, own every commercial recording issued by Crosby in his 50-year career. All 3,000 of them. They have several hundred of the 2,000 songs he sang on his CBS radio program from 1931-1955, and have an extensive collection of his outtakes—Crosby's rare, unreleased versions of his commercial songs.

The Smiths, both in their late 50s, own a first edition of Crosby's 1953 autobiography, *Call Me Lucky*, and a 54-hour tape program of "The Life and Times of Bing Crosby." The Smiths possess all Crosby's Australian and English releases that were never marketed in the U.S.

They earnestly traveled, they explain, to England and across the country these past 12 years to complete their collection, visiting thousands of antique shops and auctions. They exchanged recordings with other people who, like themselves, are members of the "Bingang," an international Crosby fan club in its 41st year which numbers about 100 members in the U.S. by Phil Smith's estimate.

Talking about their love affair with Crosby a week after his death, they spoke at times with moist eyes, and Dorothy, a soft-spoken but energetic woman, sighed and rubbed her arms, as if she still felt

goosebumps at the thought of Crosby, the casual crooner.

"We haven't listened to anything of Bing's at home yet since he died," Dorothy sighed. "We can't play his tapes or records here yet. It's too soon."

"I think the world has lost one of the great humanitarians. One of the great singers of all time," she said.

"That absolutely beautiful voice," as they both describe Crosby, first enraptured them independently when they were barely teenagers. In 1934 Phil saw the movie *She Loves Me Not*, and Crosby's rendition of "Love in Bloom" hooked him for a lifetime. In 1936, Dorothy saw *Pennies From Heaven* starring Crosby as a vagabond troubador, and she was overwhelmed by his smooth voice. When Phil and Dorothy met a couple of years later, Crosby was one of their mutual interests, and after they married in 1942 Crosby provided one of many links in their bond.

And with his voice accompanying their dinner every evening he became one of the family.

"The first record we bought was Bing," Dorothy reminisced. "Bing was really all we bought back then—we didn't care about anyone else—and all the movies we went to were Bing movies."

Their collection of Crosby works became a passion in the mid-1960s, and their bookshelf of Crosby's story-telling albums has become one of their most precious possessions.

"Instead of putting on the TV, we put on a story, and that way you can listen and do what you want," said Dorothy, warmed by the thought of the hours spent listening to Crosby's interpretations of Tom Sawyer and *The Emperor's New*



Bing Crosby

(photo courtesy RCA Records)

Clothes. "I could listen for hours and hours. Sometimes we play it several nights until bed. He tells a story so well, that you're lost in the story. I think it's his soft voice."

That golden voice produced the top record ever for a single performer. *White Christmas* has sold 400 million copies worldwide since it appeared in Crosby's 1942 movie, *Holiday Inn*, one of 59 Crosby movies. From 1943-1948, movie operators around the country voted him the top box-office movie star, and during that period Crosby won an Academy Award for his role as a modern young priest in *Going My Way*.

Crosby extended his box office

appeal throughout the 1940s and 1950s by teaming with Bob Hope in musical comedy Road pictures, beginning with *Road to Singapore* and continuing over 22 years with roads to Zanzibar, Morocco, Utopia, Rio, et cetera. Crosby surprised his vast public in 1954 by assuming a more serious role in *The Country Girl*, playing an alcoholic, has-been actor.

Although he received an Oscar nomination for *The Country Girl*, Dorothy Smith says she abhors the movie because it takes Crosby out of his nice guy character and makes him into a drunk, and "you don't like to see your hero dragged

in the mud."

Similarly, the Smiths express pleasure with the media's portrayal of Crosby as a likeable, modest entertainer. As longtime Crosby fans, they know he endured his ups and downs.

"He went through a period when he was living too high, a little too much drinking, and he landed in jail," Dorothy Smith admitted. "But that was so obscure and we're not eager to have it publicized—what good will it do?"

For the Smiths and millions of others, Crosby will be remembered as a likeable singer and actor who sometimes exasperated his fans with his self-deprecation.

"Did you see that Barbara Walters show awhile ago?" Phil Smith said. "I could have kicked his (Crosby's) butt that night the way he raved on and on about other entertainers, like Tony Bennett and others who we don't even like! I don't know whether that was false modesty or real."

The Smiths' good-natured agitation stems from their own respect for Crosby as an incredibly diverse talent. Phil Smith terms the early 1930's as his favorite Crosby years, during which Crosby touched all musical tastes from jazz to country-western to ballads.

The Smiths believe Crosby's distinctive voice gradually diminished after the 1930's, perhaps due to throat nodules that Crosby refused to have removed because an operation would risk turning him into a soprano, according to the Smiths.

"Over the years he went from a tenor to a bass," Dorothy said. "His resonance still shakes the walls after 50 years, but his voice at the end was nothing like the 1930s. But we're very happy for what he had."

Memories of Bing

A tribute to Bing Crosby by radio reviewer Stuart Tullett.



THERE WAS at least one set of parents who used to say — would you believe, more than 45 years ago? — “For God’s sake turn off that horrid noise on the wireless. How can you bear to listen to all that nonsense; all that boo-bu-bu-booming and moons in June and sunny honeymoon stuff? Why can’t you listen to some good music for a change?”

But in how short a time did those same parents find themselves entranced by the sound of “When the blue, boo-bu-bu-boo, of the night, meets the gold of the day” which heralded the start of another programme by Harry Lillis Crosby, alias Bing, or, as he styled himself, Old Groaner.

Bing Crosby died suddenly on October 14 while playing golf in Spain. For many years he had earned the respect of golfers (his usual score was in the low 70s), and the news of his death at the age of 73 must have been received by millions of sportsmen (and others) with sadness, and the rider, “What a way to go”.

Bing was, in fact, a man of slight musical talent (he took one musical lesson at school, but after his teacher told him his breathing was all wrong he gave up further tuition). However, personality and presence gave that slight talent the power to captivate the hearts and minds of the world over more than four decades.

He wanted to become a lawyer until he discovered he could make more money in show business. He left his home town of Spokane and with a friend, Al Rinker, went to Hollywood where he joined Paul Whiteman, the King of Jazz, with whom he made his first film.

There was mixed reaction from the critics, but the film set him on the road to success with audiences who realised that here was a singer with a relaxed style, kindness and good humour; qualities sadly lacking in the depression-ridden early 1930s.

He once said: “I think that every man who sees one of my movies or hears me on the radio believes firmly that he sings as well as I do, specially when he’s in the bathroom shower.” He was probably right. But singing in the rain of a shower is a different proposition to singing in front of a

camera into a microphone. A backstage technician at the London Palladium recalls: “All the big stars get nervous, pace up and down and smoke; but Bing never showed any nerves. He walked out on stage as if he was going to play golf. He was a professional . . .”

In a word, Bing was Bing; whether he was acting a part or not. His acting was an extension of his own personality. When he won an Oscar for *Going My Way* it wasn’t his role as a priest which gained him the award so much as a new projection of Bing Crosby.

His personal life was a shining example of stability. Unlike so many other Hollywood liaisons, his marriage to film star Dixie Lee in September 1930 lasted her lifetime (she died of cancer in 1952). Dixie had resisted the advances of the then penniless singer, but he persuaded her to change her mind by serenading her, on the telephone, with “I Surrender, Dear”.

Love thy neighbour was surely Bing’s philosophy — and neighbours were people everywhere. As Bob Hope said on hearing of his friend’s death: “The whole world loved Bing Crosby with a dedication that not only crossed international boundaries, but erased them.”

It was in the late 1930s that someone thought he ought to have another theme song, “a sort of standby in case the old Blue (of the Night) might require a re-tread”. This never occurred, but its intended replacement became a major success, “Just an Echo in the Valley . . . Brings Back Sweet Memories of You”.

It still does, to millions.

He had many imitators (in addition to all those bathroom balladeers) such as Frank Sinatra and “the dreamy Napalitano Dino Martini”, but none captured the sincerity, the distinctive rhythm or the touching, personal quality of his love ballads.

There’s another thing about Old Groaner: all his songs have some sort of message, even if some have been castigated as sloppy sentimentality. But they were always pleasant to listen to — and every word could be heard and understood.

Forty-five years of making friends. Some record. Even more important than the estimated 300 million he has sold.

Please! Would there be a ghost of a chance . . . just an echo . . . if, instead of some of the repeated repeats of second-class movies we could see, on television, films like the *Road* classics, with Bob Hope and Dorothy Lamour; or *College Humour* where we could learn the rudiments of social success and learn to croon. Or will they, now, become too costly?

Radio New Zealand’s National Programme gave us a quarter of an hour’s nostalgia when, on the day Bing died, they played part of his *Musical Autobiography*.

With Your Very Kind Permission, could we have more?



BING CROSBY, center, is pictured with, from left, Cincinnati Police Lt. John Oman, Detectives Robert Meldon and Bernard Greutzinger and former Kentucky Gov. A. B. (Happy) Chandler, then commissioner of baseball, during his visit to Cincinnati in 1947. All but Meldon and Chandler are deceased.

Former Detective Recalls Bing As 'Easygoing' Guy

BY BILL SCHICKEL
Enquirer Reporter

A former policeman assigned to protect Bing Crosby during what apparently was the late singer's only visit to Cincinnati recalls him as an "amiable man who loved gambling and always wore a wrinkled shirt."

"He was just that kind of easygoing person," said Robert Meldon, a Cincinnati police detective for 28 years.

Meldon, 65, said Saturday he was assigned to guard Crosby during a golf tournament in 1947 at the Hyde Park Country Club. Crosby's golfing group included A. B. (Happy) Chandler, former Kentucky governor and U.S. senator who was commissioner of baseball at the time.

"AFTER THE tournament," Meldon relates, "Crosby was looking for a place to bet on his horses." The late singer was the owner of race horses at Churchill Downs in Louisville and other tracks.

"I guess I can say this now since most of the people involved aren't around anymore and it's really not a secret—but you could bet on any horse you wanted at the old Turf & Fields restaurant," said Meldon. The restaurant was located at Sixth and Walnut Sts.

"So I took him over there. It was a place where all the ball players and celebrities would go at night," said Meldon.

"I DON'T think I would have done it for him but he was such a good-natured person and he had taken a liking to me," said Meldon,

now an investigator for the Hamilton County Welfare Department.

"As it turned out we didn't win any money; in fact, we lost," said Meldon. "But those were really great times."

Of the late singer's dressing habits, Meldon said, "He just wasn't like most people. He didn't care about wearing good clothes. It didn't make any difference to him."

Meldon also related Crosby hated signing autographs. "But he would do it as a favor for me," Meldon said he talked Crosby into giving his eight-year-old niece, Jo Ann, an autograph during his 1947 visit.

"She called me yesterday remembering the occasion," said Meldon. "I told her she is one of a very few people in Cincinnati who has his autograph."

BING DIES

Radio stations in America began their news shows with Crosby crooning, "When the Blue of the Night Meets the Gold of the Day," to announce he was dead.

In Washington, Rosalynn Carter, President Carter's wife, was "distressed" to hear of his death.

She had invited him to the White House for Christmas.

Mary Hoyt, Mrs Carter's press secretary, said:

"Only yesterday she sent him a letter asking him to sing some of his wonderful Christmas songs at the traditional Christmas party for the press on December 17," Mrs Hoyt said.

Crosby — the man who as a boy took only one singing lesson to be told that his breathing was wrong — crooned to generations of lovers and kept the fighting troops' spirits up during World War 2 with "White Christmas," his biggest hit.

And he made millions laugh in the rollicking "road" pictures.

Before leaving for the Palladium, Crosby bounced alone for an interview whistling "Oh, What A Beautiful Morning."

"Let's get on with it, he said. "I'm due on the golf course in an hour."

Crosby spoke about his back injury and said: "My doctor thinks I should

stay at home and put my feet up, but what the heck.

"Who can resist playing the Palladium?"

Crosby had arrived in Spain on Thursday morning for a golfing holiday.

Mrs Crosby said he would be buried next week in the family plot next to his first wife, Dixie Lee, in Los Angeles after a private service.

She said her son, Harry, 19, and the family's longtime butler, Alan Fisher, would return the singer's body.

● Channel 7 will replay the Bing Crosby 50th Anniversary Show at 8.30 p.m. on Tuesday.

This will be followed at 10.00 by the movie "High Society."

At 6.30 tonight, Channel 9 will screen "A Tribute to Bing Crosby."

The 30-minute tribute, by the American Broadcasting Company, will be hosted by Barbara Walters.

The Australian host for the delayed satellite transmission show will be Arthur Higgins.



Bob Machliss

Bing Crosby's death has affected Bob Machliss like the death of a friend.

"I feel sad, like I've lost one of my best friends... that's how he was to me and to a lot of other people."

Bob Machliss, 33, had never met the King of the Crooners. He was hoping to achieve that during the Crosby visit to Australia which had been rumored sometime next month.

"I had written to him about it, but I doubt he ever got my letter."

He is perhaps the premier Crosby fan in this country.

Machliss was six-years-old when a "Crosby Magic" first touched him.

"Someone gave me a copy of the Teddy Bear's Picnic."

The advertising copy-

I've lost
a 'best
friend'
— fan

writer now has 2000 records, many of them original 78's which have been painstakingly collected here and overseas.

"I've got virtually every record he ever made."

Two months ago Machliss founded the Victorian Bng Crosby Society.

He ran a Crosby radio show on 3ZZ for a year and the response to that was so good that he decided to start a club for fans.

Machliss says his society will continue, "perhaps as a memorial type of thing, not morbid, but in the past 12 months Crosby has cut about 15 new LP's so there will be posthumous issues, which will interest the members."

I sincerely believe we're dedicated to the greatest entertainer that God ever put on this earth. I'm a nostalgia nut, reveling in the likes of Cantor, Jolson, Groucho Marx, but I firmly believe that Bing stood taller than any of them. He exuded charm in his every mannerism, with his walk, movements of his arms, or varied facial expressions. And, when he threw back his head to sing, that was the frosting on the cake --the piece de resistance. Of all the eulogical quotes I've heard extolling Bing, my favorite two are the one by the priest in St. Patrick's Cathedral during the mass for Crosby - looking upward during the sermon he said, "Make room up there O Lord, Father O'Malley's on his way up" - and the TV announcer standing beside Bing's casket at dawn in the cemetery - "And how fitting it is that they choose to bury Bing Crosby, at dawn, when the blue of the night met the gold of the day."

Edward Pacocha
Shamokin, Pennsylvania

Bing Crosby's death leaves void for "super fan"

The death of Bing Crosby touched the hearts of people around the world, but for Bill Osborn, Central Collections, Bing's death left a void greater than most.

Bill became a Crosby fan in the mid-1930's, and for the past 40 years he has been more than just a fan. In fact, he is now considered one of the top authorities on Bing in this country.

"Collecting his records became a mania with me," said Bill. "Once I thought I had every one, and one night I heard one on a local radio station that I didn't have.

"I rushed to the station to try to buy the record from the manager." Instead of the record, Bill came away with a job as an announcer at the station.

For the next 18 years, Bill worked as a disc jockey on radio stations up and down the coast, collecting records as he went.

"There was never a week that I

didn't do a Crosby program," said Bill.

For the show he used anecdotes about Bing, records from his collection and interviews with Bing himself.

Bill says he has every record Bing has ever recorded from 1926 to his latest release. He also has tapes of Bing's radio shows, television appearances and even his movie soundtracks.

Bill first met Bing in the mid-30's. Later, when he lived in Hollywood, he did radio interviews with him, and when Bill came to the Seattle area, he always visited with Bing when he came to the Northwest. Bill is also a member of Club Crosby, an international fan club.

"He was something of an idol for me since I was a youngster but he was the type of person who could be your next door neighbor—a friend," said Bill.

"Strangely, Bing's death is not

that sad for those of us who knew him. He has left such a legacy of music and entertainment.

"It has left an empty spot, but I feel I've been greatly enriched by knowing him."



Bill & Bing in a 1975 interview

November 4, 1977

How can we ever replace someone like Bing? We can't, there will never be another like him. If it wasn't for Bing's records and movies to remember him by, I wouldn't know what to do. Everyone knew how I felt about him. Everywhere I went, I would tell people how great Bing was, many people didn't even know he was still active and making records. My brother Arthur made a special phone call from Miami Beach to tell me how badly he felt, my mother called from Atlantic City to tell me she cried when she heard the news, thinking of me.

Bob Edelstein
Beverly, N.J.

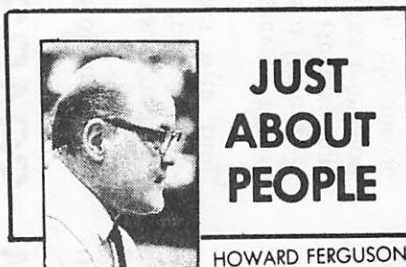
FIRST BANK NEWS
Seattle, Wash.

Old Navy man thanks Bing for memories

It was in a tavern on the southern city limits of Minneapolis, Minn., in the winter of 1943. The snow had been driven high against the side of the building and the large plate glass windows were so frosted that it was impossible to see out.

It was a typical, cold, windy, snowy Christmas Eve in Minneapolis. It was a snug feeling to be in the warm tavern, the wet navy pea jacket hung on a brass rack beside the booth and a cool glass of beer on the table.

It wasn't much of a Christmas Eve. But it was the best Red Thornton and I could muster that year because we had drawn the holiday duty at Wold-Chamberlain Air Force Base, the navy base just a couple of miles from the tavern.



WE WERE both about 19, and we were trying hard not to talk about the Christmas seasons he remembered in Neenah, Wis., and I in Spokane.

The scene came to mind yesterday afternoon when the first word of the death of Bing Crosby reached the newsroom. That neighborhood tavern, its cracked wood tables and well-worn floor, was there as if I had left it only yesterday.

And the remembrance best emphasizes the impact that this entertainer, born here in Tacoma and raised in Spokane, had on a whole generation of people.

The jukebox had been playing a series of happy seasonal songs.

At a couple of the tables, the old men brushed the suds from their lips and concentrated on their game of cribbage. A couple of sailors sat at the bar talking quietly to the bartender. Red and I were in a booth discussing any little thing that would keep our minds off where we were or from dwelling on how far from home we were.

THE LAST RECORD of the series (I think we got five plays for a quarter in those days) came on. It was Bing's "I'll Be Home For Christmas."

Red and I fell silent. The cribbage

game stopped. The conversation at the bar hung on a half-finished sentence. Everyone stared intently at the jukebox.

The record took only three minutes. The silence continued for a much longer time. Then the cribbage game resumed. The conversations were picked up.

The important thing was no one had cried or even felt bad about the song. Just the opposite. It had given each of us a slice of home. Of being there for a few minutes.

This was the special thing about Bing. No one thought of him as having millions of dollars. Or of being so famous. He was just a close friend. Just Bing. A guy who reminded us of home, of family humor and songs and conversation.

He belonged to each of us individually. Not as a group.

I HAVE HEARD it said that he was the most universally known entertainer of all time. I believe it.

But I do know of one person who, at the absolute peak of Bing's career, couldn't have cared less. A desk clerk at the famous Davenport Hotel in Spokane.

This was shortly after the war and my dad was city editor of the Spokane Spokesman-Review. He had in his circle of friends a brother of Bing's who lived in Spokane and the manager of the Davenport.

Bing had been on a fishing trip in Idaho. He came late at night to the Davenport desk to get a room.

He was refused. Through a series of telephone conversations he contacted his brother who contacted dad who contacted the manager of the hotel who advised his desk clerk to "let the guy with the four-day growth of beard, the dirty slacks, the guy who smells of fish, have a room. He's good for the charges."

It was typical of Bing that he thought it was one of the funniest things that had ever happened to him.

WELL, YESTERDAY'S banner headline said it: "Bing Crosby dies at 73."

But that can't be the end of the story. There is a whole generation of us who will always remember a tavern, some place and a time when Bing made us feel just a little less lonely.

I never was lucky enough to meet Bing. So I never had the chance to say it until now:

"Thanks, Bing."

When speaking of Bing, brevity is difficult. We all felt of him, not just a friend, but as a family member. When we heard of his passing, we realized a great portion of our lives had also been lost. No matter how much we may try to rationalize, it was a terrible loss and Bing had a lot more to give.

Wally Anthony
Lancaster,
Pa.

(Editor's note: Wally enclosed a touching family picture which he used to demonstrate that "Bing is still held dear by all ages and sexes." In the snapshot, Wally is shown with his wife, mother, daughters, niece and nephew on the lawn in front of their home. Each family member is holding a record album from different time periods of Bing's career.)

VOICE OF THE PEOPLE

Please give name and address with Letter. We will withhold both on request.

DAILY NEWS, FRIDAY, OCTOBER 21, 1977

OCTOBER 22, 1977

DER BINGLE

Queens: The death of Bing Crosby ends an entertainment career that spanned over 50 years. Millions of those who grew up in the '30s and '40s mourn his passing. His pipes, golf game, race horses and Hawaiian shirts were staples of Bob Hope's humor for years. Now Bing belongs to the ages. We shall not see his like again.

DONALD F. BARRY

Manhattan: Our country suffered one of its worst losses of the century with Bing's passing. He gave so much pleasure to so many people that it never can be adequately measured. His voice gladdened many a saddened heart. The name of Bing Crosby will be remembered for many years to come.

CARMINE J. SANTULLI

Bronx: With Bing Crosby gone, the heavens appear to be a little bit more blue with a tint of laced-in gold. Der Bingle will be sorely missed, particularly by those who grew up in the early 1930s when Bing sang his way into the hearts of millions. His inimitable greatness never will be replaced.

HARRY ALBERT

Manhattan: I remember when Bing was the headliner at the Brooklyn and Manhattan Paramount theaters back in 1931. He played there every week, and the banners proclaimed: "A show with Bing has everything." He was the tops.

WILLIAM GOLDBERG

Queens: I have been collecting Bing's records for over 40 years, and each one is a masterpiece. He has gone now, but his velvety voice will resound as long as there are people around to listen.

TOM REILLY

Manhattan: Although I am not even 20 yet, I was saddened by the death of Bing Crosby, a man whose talent matched his easy-going personality. It is unfortunate that singers of his caliber have been replaced by the depraved rock stars today's kids hero-worship.

JOHN S.

HEARTBROKEN

Bronx: As I write, my heart is heavy, burdened with unconsolable grief at the sudden, shocking death of Bing Crosby. Tears I didn't know I had flowed freely for this great man who was so much more than a singer. He was an institution. I will never forget the discouraging winter of 1944. I was a young WAC, 8,000 miles from home stationed in Egypt. My best friends had been sent back to the States, and I was really despondent. As I moped along the streets of Cairo wishing fervently for the sidewalks of Greenpoint, I stopped dead in my tracks as I heard on a scratchy old record player the voice of Bing Crosby singing "White Christmas." Hearing that familiar, beloved voice in that faraway land, I walked a little straighter, my head a little higher, a nostalgic gladness within my heart. You see, Bing was a friend and he was there when I needed one badly. Mr. Crosby, maybe one of these days "I'll be going your way," and if so, grant me the privilege of shaking the immortal hand of someone loved, admired and mourned the world over.

JOSEPHINE T. PETERSON

As for my first reactions, I can only say that at first I felt a deep shock and feeling of emptiness upon learning the news. I was commuting home which gave me the opportunity to reflect and experience many things in those very sorrowful moments. After my initial feeling of emptiness and regret, I then found myself experiencing an eerie feeling of guilt. For several minutes I felt blameworthy for demanding so much of this great human being from a professional standpoint. I felt that if Bing only could have retired that perhaps avoiding the strain of plane trips, rehearsals, recording sessions, concerts, particularly so soon after his accident might have prolonged his existence. This feeling, however, was soon reversed by a feeling of proud joy over having shared so many great experiences during the past few years. I realized that the recognition and affection which Bing received during this time were really what Bing wanted. I knew at that moment that Bing was aware of his gift and his mission to share it with the public that loved him so well. My grief thus was tempered by the knowledge that I had been given the joyous privilege of sharing part of my lifetime with a giant such as Bing.

George Reillo
Staten Island, N.Y.

I am a very long time fan of our old friend, Bing. Along with all the rest of those who loved him and his art, I grieve. It is all the more poignant because of his recent reactivation of his public career, and because I felt that Bing's resurgence was terribly important to the current swing toward a balance in our popular music. Let us hope that his influence will still be strongly felt. But I am deeply thankful for what he gave us the past few years, and am grateful that he found so much warmth from so many before the end came. It was fitting that his last performance was to a group of Spanish bricklayers on the golf course.

Kenneth Sickal
Cary, Illinois

KRON-TV News Center 4

6 P.M. Hour Long News Tues. Nov. 15, 1977

John Hambrick "Last month we began this newscast with the details of the death of Bing Crosby. Well, since then, a woman in San Mateo has been especially busy as Sam Chu Lin reports---"

Sam Chu Lin "During the regular work week Priscilla Koernig is busy preparing payrolls at this San Mateo Bank. She spends much of her free time with the Bing Crosby Fan Club and updating her collection of Crosby memorabilia that dates back to the first time she met the singer. That was at a San Mateo High School football game when Crosby's son Gary played on the Bellarmine football team. Through the years she interviewed and corresponded with the crooner and was on a first name basis." During this they showed on the screen the picture that was taken of Bing and Priscilla at that football game and several mementos in the Crosby Room in her home.

Priscilla being interviewed by Mr. Lin in her living room, "I've been a fan of his ever since I can remember. He's just been part of my life. I like his voice and I also admired the man very much because he always had a nice clean life. And then, after meeting him, he was always very nice to me----and he really appreciated his fan club very much, too."

Sam Chu Lin "One of those touching moments was found in a letter from Crosby as he described his recovery from the near fatal fall in Pasadena. Such treasures are included in the fan club's magazine appropriately entitled 'Bingang'---a fan club that feels they've lost a real friend." During this they showed Priscilla showing various treasures in the Crosby Room.

Priscilla "Now, after the month's gone by I really don't feel that there'll be completely a loss because we still have a lot---we have all his recordings, and I've got a lot of home movies I've taken of him, and a lot of pictures---a lot of good memories." During this they showed favorite snapshots of Priscilla's and an autographed photo of Bing 'To my good friend Priscilla, Bing Crosby'.

Sam Chu Lin "Miss Koernig and other Fan Club members feel Crosby is still much a part of their lives and they vow they will continue to support his Fan Club as long as possible. In San Mateo, this is Sam Chu Lin, News Center 4." During this they showed Bing and Harry performing at the Concord Pavillion on August 16, 1977.

John Hambrick "By the way the Bing Crosby Fan Club was formed back in 1936."

Mr. Lin learned about the Fan Club and me through the front page coverage in the San Mateo Times.

Priscilla J. Koernig

I won't try to express our sorrow at this loss. I know there will be other letters from writers much more capable of expressing it than I, but I've been a fan who has had Bing in my mind every day since I saw him in "Just One More Chance" in 1931 - I was 11 years old.

I want very much to emphasize that for us fans and "listening" collectors, this is the start, not the finish. We should now spread our attention over his whole career, not just the present. Remember his record of "It Must Be True" is just as alive as his record of "Send in the Clowns" or any record he's ever made. We can enjoy every record and every film he's ever done. They're all equally brilliantly alive from "Dream House" through the 50 year anniversary special.

I hope to see the real Bing fans who want to share what we have find more Bing fans and get a register of many of these people. I have made so many friends around the country just through contacts on sharing Bing items that it's just unbelievable. The greatest thing we can do to make a living memorial for Bing is to develop more Crosby fans and collectors and share what we have on tape. Bing thought Bob Roberts was the greatest - that's the kind of man Bob Roberts was, a Crosby sharer. Bob DeFlores had a Bing Crosby movie festival here in the twin cities in September. That's the kind of thing that keeps the Bing Crosby name alive - we must all support it.

Gene Douglas
Minneapolis, Minnesota

I am writing this letter as a personal appeal to keep the club going despite what has happened. Bing left us a lot of memories. Myself, I was fortunate enough to see him last December on Broadway. It probably was the greatest concert performance I've seen any performer give, and I've seen some great performers in my time. I'll always cherish that December evening as one of the greatest moments in my life... Bing's recordings are timeless performances which will always be enjoyed. My 1 1-2 year old daughter, Michelle, enjoys listening to "Play a Simple Melody" duet with son Harry from the Palladium LP. The reason I know she enjoys it is because she starts dancing to it when she hears it! I know my daughter will never see Bing perform live and that brings me to the point as to why I want the club to keep going aside from my own selfish reasons. I want to be able to tell my daughter what kind of man Bing was. I want to make sure she knows he was a warm, friendly, generous, and kind fellow who had a lot of friends who loved him and returned their love.

Richard B. Pearson
Arlington, Virginia

It is gradually sinking in that Bing is really gone, and there is some comfort in the fact that there remain so many things to keep his memory fresh for all of us--each, perhaps in a different way, but nonetheless, isn't it wonderful that he will be remembered as the person he really was? No one need apologize for any of his public utterances, or his conduct, or his character, as is the case of so many of those who have preceded him in his march into the beyond...I'm sure we all were convinced that Bing was indestructable--but how nice that he went out in a flash, rather than from some lingering illness that would have tormented him both physically and mentally. And he was on top--out in front--right to the end. God bless his memory.

Alston W. Sutton
Sacramento, California

Nick Thimmesch

Another Bing Crosby? Not in this fragmented nation

WASHINGTON—The death of Bing Crosby was more than the passing of an eminently likable man whose voice was heard by more people than anyone else's in the world.

Bing Crosby will be missed not just for the happiness he brought us but because we sense that, as a people, we are no longer capable of being held together by the warmth and familiarity of a Crosby singing. A younger Bing Crosby today couldn't gather us into American clusters the way he did for an entire generation and more.

American life has been dispersed, sent to a million frantic corners, put into a well-fed, well-supplied purgatory, and Crosby's baritone voice couldn't again make it the way it was when we were together.

The obituaries said that Crosby's career began in the '20s. In those days, Crosby was a carouser, but we were a carousing nation in the '20s. When the depression struck, Crosby was right there with a song, "Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?" He was needed to cheer us up. Radio's Kraft Music Hall, with Crosby's singing and kidding, sort

of told us not to worry, better days were ahead.

For Americans, World War II would have been harder without Bing Crosby and Bob Hope. What could bring us all home, no matter where we were, like

He was placed
on earth to
sing and make
people feel
happy inside,
for 51 years
he did exactly
that, he was
doing it the
day God called
him home.

Girvan Paterson
Victoria, Aust.

Crosby singing "Silent Night" and "White Christmas" when headlines told of setbacks, breakthroughs, and advances by American forces?

"You could warm your hands on the sound of his voice" is how Tom Shales described American feeling about Crosby in the Depression and World War II. In retrospect, that might seem naive, but it was earnest and there was a surge of goodwill in it.

We lost much of that spirit in the soul-searching '60s. Crosby drifted from sight but never out of earshot. His voice could not be put away any more than Christmas could.

In our TV age, talent is consumed like so much pulp wood stuffed into a blast furnace. In the furious competition among groups to have their voices heard, political leadership atrophies, and popular figures are soon diminished.

Pop figures are far more transient now than in Crosby's best days. Reggie Jackson hit five home runs in the World Series, but Babe Ruth will be remembered longer.

Nowadays, we can't help looking to

find something wrong with celebrities. Bing Crosby had difficulties with the sons from his first marriage and suffered other tribulations. But we were not inclined to make trouble for him about all this. These days we demand all the dirt on Jackie Onassis, and Teddy Kennedy, and Lyndon Johnson, and the assassinated President, and Spiro Agnew, and Richard Nixon, and all the others who occupied center stage, full limelight. We like to make them naked and ashamed.

We live in a time of the put-down hero, of the shattered myth, of the evisceration of anything which embodies sentiment or hope. Crosby could have been consumed in this fire, but in his casual yet intelligent way he stayed clear of it.

We used to worry about having enough to eat or getting home from war, alive and with limbs intact. Now people worry about lifestyle, the Internal Revenue Service, inflation, and cholesterol. Heroes and omnipresent popular figures like Crosby apparently can't survive these days.

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TO ME, BING CROSBY WAS THE ONLY ENTERTAINER THAT I ADMIRERD SO MUCH FOR SUCH A LONG TIME, HE WAS SOMEONE SPECIAL FROM THE VERY FIRST TIME I HEARD HIM ON THE RADIO IN MY CHILDHOOD. AS I GREW UP, BING WAS ALWAYS AROUND IN HIS MUSIC AND SONGS. BING, HAD A QUALITY THAT HAS NEVER BEEN REPLACED, A SORT OF SPECIAL CLASS. HE HAD A STYLE, AND A WAY WITH WORDS, WHEN EVER HE ENTERTAIN HIS AUDIENCES. AL THRU MY SCHOOL DAYS AND ALL THRU WW2, BING ALWAYS SEEMED TO BE AROUND, WITH HIS SONGS, HIS KIDDING AROUND, AND HIS MOVIES. BING WAS A REAL SPECIAL PERSON, AND ALTHOUGH HE MAY BE GONE FOREVER TO SOME PEOPLE, TO ME, BING WILL ALWAYS BE AROUND.

A LOST SOUL

Frank Salas

FRANK SALAS

CLASSIFIED

John James (non-member), 12 Carvoza Rd., Truro, Cornwall, England TR1 1BB has autographed copy of Bing (1st ed.) by Charles Thompson and autographed letter available. Will accept bids.

Lucile Johnson (non-member), 1741 Melody Lane, Medina, Ohio 44256 has mint copy of 78 rpm Bluebird B-7118 (Crosby-Columbo) available. Will accept highest bid.

Tal Kanigher (non-member), P.O. Box 6294, Burbank, Ca. 91505 has original autographed 11x14 photo of Bing circa 1940 from the estate of Jack Dempsey. Offers it for \$100.00 postpaid & insured.

James Saukas, 7 Lombardi Lane, Charleston Heights, So. Carolina has copies of "R & R" magazine published for American servicemen in Europe. Three different issues (England, Berlin, rest of Germany) all have tributes to Bing. Jim will mail copies first come first served to anyone sending a stamped (2-13¢ stamps) self-addressed envelope 6 x 8-1 4.

George Gayhart, 208 Bennington St., East Boston, Mass. 02128 wants to trade on reel-to-reel. Has approximately 250 songs from Bing's radio shows-- mainly Clooney & Buddy Cole. Wants Blue label Deccas.

* * * * *

Continued from Page 35

Crosby had also been part-owner of the Pittsburgh Pirates baseball team and owned a stable of race horses. Bing was a avid sportsman, being equally at ease crooning into a microphone, fishing for salmon on a wild river with his pal Phil Harris, or shooting grouse in Scotland with another friend, the late Francis H. I. Brown of Hawaii.

For years Der Bingle played in his own Clambake joining either with home club professional Cam Puget or the great Ben Hogan, handling himself with ease with either one.

A member of Cypress Point Club, Bing was one of three golfers who has ever made a hole-in-one on the difficult 220-yard par three 16th at that course.

One of his greatest golfing thrills came when he moved his Crosby Clambake to the Del Monte Forest where he had a home at that time. Plagued by constant rain each January, Bing would chuckle when golfers griped about the weather: "Where else can you see the world's best golfers, playing the world's greatest courses, under the world's worst conditions?"

His quote has been used a thousand times since.

"Look at the great man," bandleader Phil Harris

once asked, "Have you ever known a man who has done more for golf?"

Crosby's sons by his first marriage, Gary, Phillip, Lindsay, and Dennis are all fine golfers, but it looks as though Bing has left his favorite sport a real legacy in 15-year old son Nathaniel, a two-handicapper from Burlingame High School.

Nathaniel played in the Examiner Junior Championship last summer and it didn't take long to notice that Nat was a real competitor, yet had the unpretentiousness and coolness of his famous father.

Bing Crosby may have given golf more than anyone could ever realize — a future tour champion.

JOIN THE
BING CROSBY PHOTO CLUB

Details: FRANK MURPHY
32 FERNDAL AVENUE, WALLSEND
TYNE & WEAR. Telephone: 629464

A Christmas Tribute

Sung by: BOB LUMAN Polydor PD 14444
(USA)

We'll have to sing "Blue Christmas",
Although it may be white,
For the voices of the singers,
are not with us tonight.

Oh, beautiful "White Christmas",
The world still has your song;
And every Christmas season,
We'll still sing along.

This is the bluest Christmas,
That we have ever known;
The songs are still for singing,
But the singers have gone home.

We'll have to sing "Blue Christmas",
Although it may be white,
For the voices of the singers,
Are not with us tonight.

The angel choir sounds better,
And so much more inspired -
Because two golden voices
Have been added to the choir.

Where joy goes on forever,
And "Hallelujahs" ring -
Their voices blend together,
In praises to the King!

Their voices blend together,
In praises to the King!

Although neither is mentioned by name, there can be no doubt
as to the "Two golden voices" - Elvis and Bing.

NEWSWEEK for December 26, 1977, listed the following prominent persons whose obituaries appeared in 1977: Leopold Stokowski, Guy Lombardo, Andy Devine, Peter Finch, Archbishop Makarios, Robert Lowell, Ludwig Erhard, BING CROSBY, Groucho Marx, Maria Callas, Erroll Garner, Joan Crawford, Robert M. Hutchins, Zero Mostel, Freddie Prinze, Queen Alla of Jordan, Alfred Lunt, Vladimir Nabokov, Anais Nin, Sir Anthony Eden, James Jones, Ethel Waters, John McClellan, Eddie (Rochester) Anderson, Werner Von Braun, Elvis Presley, Clementine Churchill. Since that date, Charles C. Aplin has joined the group. 1977 - a year of great loss.

BING

A tribute originating in Australia

Sung by: PAUL MC KAY

Fable FB-312

(Song opens with vocal noodling, in Crosby's style)

Zah zoo baden baden doo day-
Ba ba baden baden do da day - -

Well, he could make you laugh, and he could make you cry -
He had a certain kind of twinkle in his eye -
Oh! the man could sing! The one and only Bing!
When he took a part, he played it from the heart;
And everyone felt the magic, right from the start.
Hey! Hey! the man had zing! Yeah!
And that's what made Bing king!

Well, don't you say "He's gone", 'cause Bing still lives on,
With a boo-boo-boo-boo-boo-boo-boo-boo-beautiful song.
There's a jazz-swing jam, where the angels am!
And guess who's out in front, a-singing with the band!
Well, he could hit the spot, with soft, and cool, or hot;
And now he's swinging on a star with the friends he's got!
Oh, the joy he'd bring!
The one and only Bing!

Well, he was still unique, though them old bones creak,
Still a-singing songs, seven days a week.
He had them in the aisle, singing Ol' Bing's style,
You just forgot your troubles, and you turned on a smile.
Well, he made you laugh, and he could make you cry,
He had a certain kind of special twinkle in his eye.
Oooh, the boy could sing!
The one and only Bing!

Zah zoo baden baden do day, ba ba ba baden baden do day,
Ba ba bum, ba ba bum do day!

Well, don't you say "He's gone", 'cause Bing still lives on,
With a boo boo-boo-boo-boo-boo-boo-boo-boo-beautiful song.
There's a jazz-swing jam, where the angels am,
And guess who's out in front, a-singing with the band!
Well, he could hit the spot, with soft and cool, or hot;
And now he's swinging on a star with the friends he's got!
Oh, the joy he'll bring!
The one and only Bing!

Hey, hey! the man had zing! Yeah!
That's what made Bing king!

He had the kind of understanding
Everybody took a hand in,
The-one-and-only-tugging-at-your-heartstrings-Bing!!!

(Whispered) Bless Bing!!

SO LONG, BING

And a tribute from England

Sung by: J. J. BARRY

EMI 2727

(Spoken) When I remember my childhood, the memory that keeps coming back is of my father. Every day, after work, he used to head right for the shower, and through the sound of the running water, all I could hear was "Where the Blue of the Night Meets the Gold of the Day - ba ba boo, ba ba boo, ba ba boo!" I guess the best way for one to pay tribute to Bing Crosby is to say that every fellow in the world thought he could sing just like Bing - in the shower, of course!

(Sung)

Good bye, Bing!
You taught the world to sing!
Now you've gone away, just won't be the same!
So long, Bing!
You made the Christmas sleighbells ring,
You made life seem such an easy game.

(Spoken) The lucky folks who met Bing Crosby found a nice, warm, real person. And the influence he had over so many singers of today, well, that's legendary. Such stars as Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, even the great Elvis, they all learned a bit from Mr. Crosby. In fact, I think he helped us all to sing!

(Sung)

Good bye, Bing!
An average guy who liked to sing,
Smiling on the screen, or putting on the green;
Thank you, Bing!
For all the memories you bring,
You made life seem such an easy game!

Good bye, Bing!
You taught the world to sing;
Now you've gone away, just won't be the same!
So long, Bing!
You made the Christmas sleighbells ring!
You made life seem such an easy game!

So long, Bing - - - - -

Bing was the person that gave me life, yes gave it to me, by making it possible for me to come out of an oxygen tent that I had spent 18 years in. By singing along with Bing, I learned to breathe on my own, I owed Bing my life. His family became my family, Larry Crosby was my Uncle Larry. Bing to me was the father I had never known. And when he died on the 14th of October, I lost a father and a friend, and I might add it came at a time when I needed him most, because my mother is not expected to live. She also is dying with cancer. All last summer before he left for Europe, Bing wrote me and gave me courage, I shall never forget him or shall I ever stop loving him, he was a part of me and always will be. I waited thirty years to meet him, and then three years ago Uncle Larry made it possible. That is when I met all of you, August 11, 1974. I shall never forget that day, as I shall never forget Bing Crosby.

Nancy Nelson
Van Nuys, California

IN MEMORIAM

STEVE MASON

Passed Away
June 18, 1977

Steve, who was widely known as "The Crooner," passed away last June 18th.

Throughout his 40 year career Steve sang at many of the popular nightclubs and show-places in and around New York. He also had released a number of albums which were distributed nationally and internationally. His performances were always built around the "old fashioned" style of the crooners of the early 1930s, Bing Crosby and Russ Columbo, both of whom were the dominating influences that first inspired Steve at the beginning of his career.

He maintained a very close personal friendship with Bing for many years. It was perhaps most appropriate that Steve was given the opportunity to appear on television with Bing Crosby for the first and only time last December, while Bing was in New York City at the Uris Theatre. Following the TV show Steve mentioned that the appearance with Bing was the high point of his career.

I knew Steve Mason for many years, and loved and admired him both as a friend and as a decent man who always derived a great deal of personal fulfillment in knowing that his music brought much enjoyment and happiness to others.

Steve is survived by his wife Frances, and by his mother. There are no words to adequately express how much we all shall miss him.

-- Bob Kumm

By VICTOR DAVIS

BING Crosby will, of course, go on living in the memories of his millions of fans. But, in this age of film and tape he will also live on in a more tangible way.

He died suddenly nine days ago but nevertheless in a few weeks' time we shall be able to see "Bing Crosby's Merrie Olde Christmas" on TV.

His widow, Kathy Crosby, has said that she wants the programme to be a celebration of a life well spent and not an occasion for sadness.

This was the last TV special that Bing made and over the phone from California last week Kathy Crosby told Lord Grade of ATV: "I'm so glad you've decided to go ahead with the show."

It was Lord Grade who three years ago signed Bing for an annual Christmas show to be taped in England. Bing was here for a stage appearance. "While you're here, Bing..." said Lord Lew.

This year's hour-long programme will be networked on ITV and will be syndicated around the world. Ultimately, 300,000,000 people will see Bing's final curtain. Appropriately, his last song of all will be his most famous: Irving Berlin's "White Christmas."



Bing and Baxter: The multi-role impersonator in Bob Hope guise

The show was recorded in September at ATV's Elstree Studios, with Bing and his family—Kathy, daughter Mary Frances, and sons Harry and Nathaniel—creating make-believe Christmas cheer.

Viewers will see the Crosby family arriving for a stay at an English stately home where the butler is named Hudson, the cook Mrs Bridges and the maid Rose.

All these Upstairs, Downstairs characters have a passing resemblance to the versatile Stanley Baxter, who also comes in handy to fill the space in which we expect to see Bob Hope.

Ron "Oliver" Moody adds a Dickensian note and Twiggy is on hand to make a duet with Bing of "Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas."

Bing lets David Bowie "grab a little of the action" when they perform "The Little Drummer Boy" and the carol "Peace On Earth."

Said production manager Harry Bell: "I'm happy to say that Bing thoroughly enjoyed making his last show. He was in fantastic health. He was the complete pro and the nicest man to work with. He wanted no fuss and even stood in line in the canteen."

"On the last day Bing gave each of us on the staff a credit card case inscribed 'A Merrie Olde Christmas from Bing.'"

"I tell you, stars like him don't come along very often. We hope his family will be proud of this show—a last tribute to a good man."



Bing and Bowie: dueting on carols for TV spectacular

DAILY EXPRESS Monday October 24 1977

Singing boys get great praise—from great star

ONE OF THE world's great entertainers has died, and I guess there cannot be many homes in Croydon which don't have at least one record of Bing Crosby.

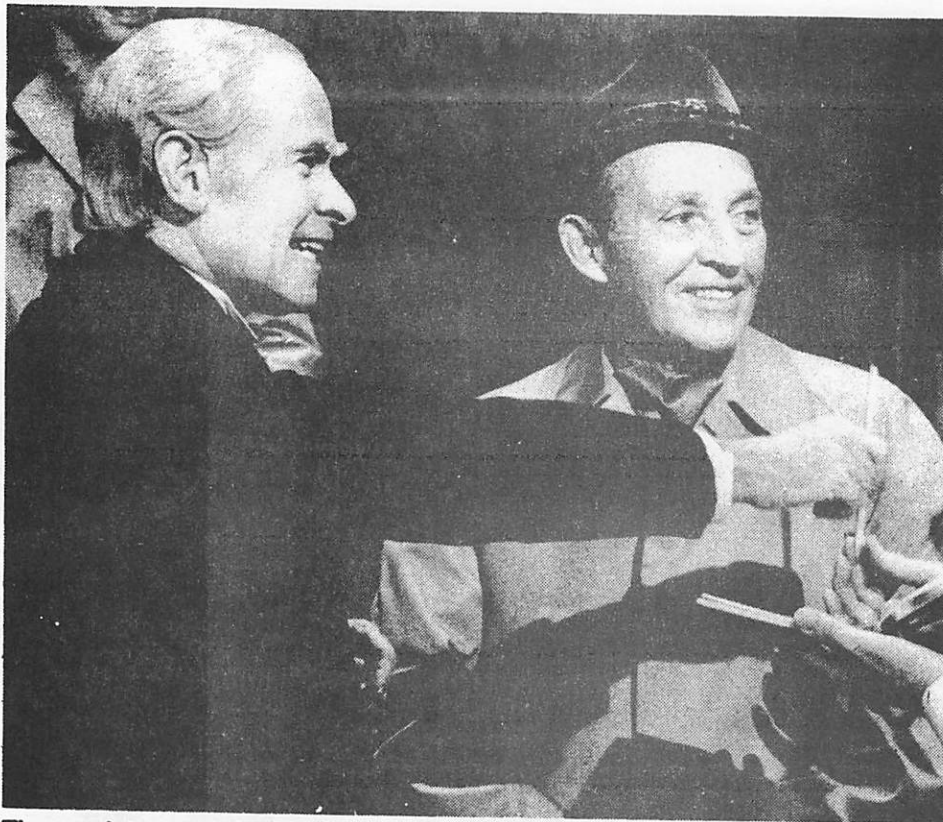
One of the best, and most poignant, of the many tributes I have heard is that millions of people feel they have lost not so much a star, as a friend.

And I am sure that applies particularly to the boys of Trinity School Choir, Croydon.

Just a few days before his death they were with Bing and his family for two days at ATV studios recording a special Christmas show.



□ BING: leaving a fine memory.



These pictures, taken only weeks before Bing Crosby's death, show him making "Bing Crosby's Merrie Olde Christmas" in England. The spectacular is the last holiday show he made.

Those lucky boys apparently found it hard to realise at such close hand what a great figure he was. Bing was so relaxed and unassuming, and so easy to get along with.

In fact—and this was so typical of the man—at the end of one filming session Bing called photographers over and insisted they took pictures of him with the boys.

Later he wrote to them: "Dear Boys, It was a genuine pleasure working and singing with you. You are great."

It was a sentiment he repeated during an interview on LBC, when he described them as the best boys' choir (and the best behaved) he had ever worked with.

A lovely tribute from a lovely man—and what a wonderful memory for those boys to tell their grandchildren. . . .

The Advertiser,

Friday, Oct. 21, 1977



A tanned Crosby managed to slip out for golf between takes with such co-stars as model-actress Twiggy, who joined him here in a version of Sleigh Ride. Colleagues said he was "charming; absolutely professional."



Bing's Christmas Show, which will be shown in the U.S. before the holidays, is a warm, nostalgic hour spun around the notion of Bing and Kathryn with their children (from left) Mary-Frances, Nathaniel and Harry, supposedly in England on vacation to hunt a long-lost relative. The show includes, naturally, the legendary song *White Christmas*.



Looking mighty like Bob Hope, British impersonator-comedian **Stanley Baxter** dons jester's clothes to remind Bing of his ski-nosed companion *On The Road* to everywhere.



Characteristically casual in a beat-up cardigan, Crosby shoots the breeze with English rock star **David Bowie**, who teamed up with Bing in several numbers.

Bing's Show a Fine Gift for Viewers

When word arrived that CBS was planning to telecast "Bing Crosby's Merrie Olde Christmas" with Der Bingle only a few weeks in his grave, I wondered "Can they be that greedy for Christmas profits?" The producers, I supposed, probably had so much invested in the show that they couldn't afford to shelve it. That may be true, but it really doesn't matter.

The Crosby program, at 8 p.m. Wednesday, is a real rarity: a TV variety hour that's almost a pure delight. All in all, a perfect valedictory for a master entertainer in the season when we'll miss him the most. That's especially surprising since last year's Crosby Christmas hour was a monumental bomb, indulging his nontalented second family.

This time, Crosby and producing giants Dwight Hemion and Gary Smith kept Kathryn, Mary Francis, Harry



and Nathaniel blessedly quiet. In the foreground we get two of England's finest entertainers — Ron Moody and impressionist Stanley Baxter — and two British celebrities: David Bowie and Twiggy.

Set in an English country house, the special has the Crosbys visiting an imaginary British relative, Sir Percival (Moody). They're greeted by three members of the "Upstairs, Downstairs" staff — Hudson, Rose and Mrs. Bridges — all played by Baxter with affectionate brilliance. Later, he reappears for a marvelous, if slightly limp wisted, impression of a British native named Leslie Townes Hope. Bing, who called him Bob along with the rest of us, breaks up.

Equally fine is a song and dance through an English village, with Moody and Twiggy playing a gallery of Dickensian characters. He's Fagin, Scrooge and Quilp; she's the Artful Dodger, Tiny Tim and Little Nell.

Even Bowie, erstwhile glitter rock star, comes off well, singing "Peace on Earth" counterpoint to Crosby's "Little Drummer Boy." Briefly, Bowie blares an inap-

propriate rock tune. But the Trinity Boys Choir sets things right with carols.

Then Bing bids us goodbye with a touching message and "White Christmas." If you get through that without a lump near your vocal cords, you qualify to play Scrooge next year, when this fine program should be revived.

One final note. The day Crosby died I was walking behind two lads, about 9, and one announced the sad news. Replied the other member of the rock generation, "Ba-ba-ba-boo." That, David Bowie, is immortality.

Do you hear what I hear?



John
Voorhees

While the Christmas commercials have been evident for some time, TV programmers have held off until tonight to get down to the business of providing us with wall-to-wall Christmas programs — and tonight's double bill contains what will certainly be the odds-on favorite as this season's most sentimental Christmas show.

That is C.B.S.' "Bing Crosby's Merrie Olde Christmas," the final TV program the singer made before his death in October, to be shown at 9 tonight on Channel 7.

While Bing's millions of fans will be especially touched at certain times throughout the program, particularly when he joins Twiggy in singing "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas," the emphasis is really on having a festive time in the Christmas holiday spirit and the program is, with one exception, a thoroughly entertaining and classy Christmas special, as relaxed and comfortable as Crosby's records, films and TV programs always were.

This is hardly surprising since it combines Crosby's talents with those of Emmy Award-winners Gary Smith and Dwight Hemion who produced and directed the program in England.

Fortunately, the Crosby family, while on hand to lend atmosphere, doesn't get into the act too much. The performing is left to the performers — Crosby, Twiggy, English music hall star Ron Moody, the Trinity Boys Choir and that wonderful English cutup, Stanley Baxter, who portrays Hudson, Mrs. Bridges and Rose (from Upstairs, Downstairs) as well as doing an absolutely smashing impersonation of Bob Hope that keeps threatening to break up Crosby.

Buz Kohan has concocted a script that serves nicely as a bridge from song to song and manages to encompass everything from Sondheim's "Side by Side by Side" to "Jingle Bell Rock." Moody is as adept as Baxter at playing several roles and he is featured, along with Twiggy, in a big production number built around Charles Dickens' characters.

The only weak spot in the show comes when rock star David Bowie is introduced. He manages to get through a duet with Crosby without offending anyone but then, for some unfathomable reason, he does an electronic solo, "Heroes," that could scarcely be more out of place, in total opposition to the style and mood of this program. The only thing that will keep Crosby fans from turning off the show at this point is the knowledge that Crosby will eventually sing "White Christmas."

This comes at the program's



Bing Crosby

close and which Crosby performs so beautifully, and sincerely and unaffectedly as if he were singing it for the very first time.

The show closes at that appropriate moment with a long shot of Crosby looking out the window at a Christmas scene. It was a lovely finish, which is probably all that Smith and Hemion had in mind, but in light of subsequent events, it seems positively prophetic.



'Till Next Time,' Said Bing Crosby

BY RICHARD K. SHULL

For 35 years now, ever since that grim Christmas of 1942 when he introduced "White Christmas," Bing Crosby has been as much a part of the holiday as the colors red and green.

And in recent years, even though his holiday specials with his family were less than artistic triumphs, no one ever faulted him for at least giving it the old Crosby try.

So it was especially gratifying last night that his final Christmas special, taped in England five weeks before his death on Oct. 14, was the best piece of TV work he had done in years. And somehow, the word "work" seems as out-of-place around Crosby as David Bowie's solo was in his show.

Obviously, the show wasn't intended as a posthumous memorial but it was loaded with portentous little phrases and comments throughout that have a special meaning now.

As the show wound to a close, Bing made one of his easy little speeches on how Christmas "has a way of calling up the best in people, a time to look backward with gratitude for being able to come this far, and a time to look for ahead with hope and optimism. Till next time . . ."

He then swung into his perennial show closer, "White Christmas," then moved away and stood in profile looking out a window at a snow scene. And that was the last image of Bing Crosby.

His class and style was there, right to the final frame.

Along the way, the show had some rollicking good humor and a slick professional touch, primarily because his family was present but not called upon to tax their minimal talents.

Ron Moody, Twiggy, Stanley Baxter and Bowie livened up the show.

And between Baxter's uncanny impersonation of Bob Hope and Crosby's constant insult patter about Hope, it seemed as though the comedian was there.

The theme this year was an invitation by a titled black sheep of the Crosby clan for Bing to bring his family to England for Christmas.

At the baronial manor, Crosby and family met the household staff — Hudson the butler, Mrs. Bridges the cook and Rose the parlor maid, all played by Baxter.

In one sequence, Baxter as Mrs. Bridges unloaded a non-stop string of the shaggiest shaggy dog stories you've ever heard while sipping tea in the downstairs kitchen.

Moody, too, was all over the place as Crosby's relative, Sir Percy Crosby, and as Charles Dickens, Scrooge, Fagin and Quilp.

In his latter three characters, Moody performed opposite Twiggy, who was surprisingly good as Tiny Tim, the Artful Dodger and Little Nell in a free-wheeling song and dance of "Where Would You Be Without Me?"

Bowie drifted into the show long enough for a duet with Crosby in which Bowie sang "Peace on Earth" while Crosby counterpointed with "The Little Drummer Boy." They were utterly compatible. But, of course, Bowie was

looking straight. It remained to be seen how Crosby might have reacted to some of Bowie's unisex grotesqueries.

Bowie followed the duet with one of his amplified and throbbing solos which was a shattering contrast to the rest of the show.

At some point in the show, and it all moved so easily and comfortably that the hour slipped by, Crosby and Twiggy sang a duet of "Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas," complete with that poignant line which says:

"Through the years we all will be together, if the fates allow."

Christmas without Crosby is as unthinkable as . . . as New Year's Eve without Guy Lombardo.

Bing has given me much pleasure, enjoyment, and entertainment for many, many years, and will continue to do so because of his records that I have collected since I was a teenager. In August of this year I wrote him telling him how much I have enjoyed his singing for so many years. A couple of weeks later I was pleasantly surprised to receive a very nice letter from Bing thanking me for my kind remarks and showing his sincere appreciation for my interest and loyalty. I really hadn't expected a reply to my letter and will always cherish his friendly gesture, taking the time and effort to write me at a time when he was busy starting his final tour.

Bob Chandler
Hollywood, Fla.

Our sad farewell to Bing



By **RON MILLER**
Television Editor

NO MATTER HOW GOOD tonight's CBS special, "Bing Crosby's Merrie Olde Christmas," (9 p.m., Channels 5, 10, 46) turns out to be, there's no way I'm going to feel anything but sad when it's over.

Knowing it's the last glimpse of Bing will unplug my tear ducts and make me glad I'm watching it in the sanctuary of my own home instead of a screening room filled with hard-nosed, unsentimental types.

Though I never met Bing, he has been a part of my life since infancy, a voice that still echoes through the house even when the stereo isn't on and the FM not tuned to KMPX. He was so beloved in my family that one of the shocks of my childhood was learning he really wasn't a relative after all.

Bing had a down to earth quality that probably was the secret that kept him from ever losing his stature as America's most popular entertainment figure. He was just one of the family to most of us who grew up with him.

ON THE SURFACE there wasn't much to explain Bing's immense success. He was pleasant-looking, but not handsome. His physique, even in his prime, lent itself better to Bob Hope wisecracks than beefcake photos by the seashore. His wardrobe on screen and off may have been comfortable, but it was as stylish as rummage sale leftovers.

But anybody who was ever exposed to Bing's incredible talent had to be impressed. The trouble was Bing made everything he did look so effortless that some folks never realized they were being exposed to an incredible talent.

Though he made his movie debut around 1930, Bing never figured to amount to much on screen. His self-effacing attitude was legendary in Hollywood and apparently never changed.



BING CROSBY
... Final bow

"If I'm going to get by in pictures," Bing reportedly said back in the early 1930s, "it's

going to be as a singer, with about as much acting as you could expect from a guy standing in front of a microphone."

Yet by 1934, Bing was among the top 10 box office stars and by 1944 was an Oscar-winner for his acting in "Going My Way." He was nominated twice more as an actor and sang an amazing 13 Oscar-nominated songs over a 25-year period, a seemingly untouchable record.

BING'S IMPACT ON TV was considerable, though in no way comparable to his presence in movies. He made his TV debut in 1952 in a benefit show with Bob Hope and appeared regularly in a variety of formats until tonight's special — his last recorded performance for cameras.

Bing's foray into the sitcom format, ABC's "The Bing Crosby Show," was not very successful and lasted only one season. He was much more at ease in musical variety, hosting "The Hollywood Palace" for years and moving on to his annual Christmas musical shows.

His most offbeat TV exercises were the 1956 Maxwell Anderson musical-drama "High Tor," which introduced Julie Andrews, and his last dramatic performance, the 1970 TV movie "Dr. Cook's Garden," in which he played a kindly old doctor who put aging patients out of their misery.

His annual golf tournament became a TV sports institution and will continue under son Harry's sponsorship.

His company produced many hit shows, including "Ben Casey" and "Hogan's Heroes," before he sold it for a tidy profit. Though he once said TV was "pretty good, considering it's for nothing," it was evident Bing loved television.

Now that he's gone, it's only fitting that Bing's farewell performance should be on the medium that will give him what may be the largest single audience he ever played to in a lifetime as America's finest popular entertainer.

★ ★ ★

STATION BREAKS: Crosby fans should plan to attend Friday night's "Tribute To Bing Crosby" benefit show for KMPX radio at the Avenue Theater, 2650 San Bruno Ave., San Francisco. Two rare Crosby shorts from the Mack Sennett period will be screened and Scott Beach will emcee a live show. Tickets are \$5 (tax deductible) for the 7:30 p.m. show. Call 415-468-2636 for more information.

San Jose, Ca.

Dwight Chapin

The Crosby prince

NATHANIEL CROSBY sat there very straight and very poised, more man than boy, although he just turned 16 in October, the month his father died.

He could have been right out of a medieval history book, the young prince who became a king by royal ascension.

But he wasn't replacing an ordinary king. He was replacing Bing Crosby. If Bing's older sons are to be believed, merely living under the man was a difficult task.

Nathaniel didn't show a hint of strain, however. He spoke with respect — even awe — of his dad, but he spoke with humor, too, of a warm, father-son relationship where the roles were always in clear, no-nonsense perspective.

Nathaniel, unlike most of Crosby's other children and wife, Kathryn, isn't going to try show business. He wants to be a professional golfer, something his dad just might have been if he hadn't had another talent.

Bing knew that Nathaniel wanted a career in golf. Last year, as a 15-year-old sophomore, the youngster was the No. 1 player on the Burlingame High School team . . . a one-handicapper who won the club championship at Burlingame Country Club.

Nathaniel was asked how his dad reacted to that achievement.

"He said, 'That's just great,'" Nathaniel remembered. "But we didn't break out the champagne or anything. I had a tournament to play the next day, and, besides, that wasn't his way."

IT WAS AN old-fashioned closeness between father and youngest son — one that has made Nathaniel an unusual teen-ager, a throwback, almost, to the '40s and '50s.

He's interested in U.S. history and Thomas Jefferson, in self-improvement and "mellow" music. "I don't go much for the teeny-bopper stuff," he said. "I'm more into singers like Johnny Mathis — and my dad. We didn't play his records when we were growing up, but I enjoy listening to him sing now."

Nathaniel sat in the library of the Crosby home in Hillsborough. There were Christmas stockings for his brother, sister and himself on the fireplace, books of all sorts lining one wall. And there were mementoes and memories of Bing — everywhere — the Oscar he won for his role as a priest in "Going My Way"; a portrait of him as the tipsy doctor in "Stagecoach"; pictures of him hunting and golfing.

Nathaniel had called a press conference to announce formally that he would take over for his dad and run the 37th annual Bing Crosby National Pro-Am golf tournament (Jan. 21-22 at Pebble Beach.)

"I don't think dad carried on the tournament 36 years to have it stopped once he was gone," Nathaniel said. "His only fear was that it would be turned into a commercial venture. I have good advice from people who worked on the tournament with dad for many years, and we won't let that happen."

BUT THIS IS a 16-year-old, a high-school junior fighting grades and the pressures of growing up. Isn't running the Crosby tournament a pretty heady assignment?

"There is pressure," Nathaniel said, "to make decisions, because you make a lot of friends and enemies in the process. But I'm trying to do what dad would have done — to consider the value of every decision before I make it."

"When something becomes almost traditional, as the tournament has, you make time for it. My mother felt I was the best qualified person in the family to carry it on. She's not even going to be there. She'll be on tour in a play, 'Same Time Next Year.' I think it will do her a lot of good to get away."

The talk was of golf — of Nathaniel's godfather, golfer Jackie Burke, who had given him the shirt he was wearing as a Christmas present; of the possibility that Nathaniel might go on to play the sport at Stanford or the University of Houston; of handicaps and pairings and practice rounds.

But it kept coming back to the man who wasn't there, Bing Crosby.

Nathaniel remembered small, personal things. "He never saw 'Gone With the Wind,'" the boy said "because if he loved a book, he never saw the movie."

"He was always telling me to read — not trashy mystery novels but the classics — and to comprehend everything as well as I possibly could. He had such an extraordinary vocabulary, he was really fun to listen to. You could say I idolized him. Not for who he was, but for what he was."



RECORDS

New - LPs

1. Seasons - Polydor 2442-151
2. Beautiful Memories - United Artists UAS 30116
3. A Tribute to Duke - Concord Jazz CJ-50 - includes Crosby track "Don't Get Around Much Anymore" - available for \$8.93 (includes postage & handling) from Concord Jazz Inc., Box 845, Concord, Ca. 94522
4. Joe Bushkin Celebrates 100 Years of Recorded Sound - United Artists UAG 30142 - includes Crosby tracks "Now You Has Jazz" and "Sail Away From Norway" recorded Oct. 4, 1977
5. The World in 1977 - AP 1977 (Associated Press windup of year - includes chorus of "I Surrender Dear" and brief conversation with Bing discussing his favorite record)

Singles

1. As Time Goes By\Theres Nothing That I Haven't Sung About - Decca 13737
2. Seasons\On the Very First Day of the Year - Polydor 2058-952
3. Beautiful Memories\Deja Vu - United Artists UA 36305

Reissues -LPs

1. Bing & Co. - MCA MCFM 2775
2. A Christmas Toast - Twentieth Century BT 551
3. Bing, 1931, 1975-76 - Decca DBC 1-2 (2 LP set)
4. The Andrews Sisters Live - Amalgamated Andros AND S4566
5. Bing - Columbia Special Products P-14369
6. Fancy Meeting You Here - RCA LSP 1854
7. Bing Crosby and Louis Armstrong - Capitol SM 11735
8. That Travelling Two Beat - Capitol SM 11736
9. Bing Sings the Great Country Hits - Capitol SM 11737
10. Popular Christmas Classics - Capitol Special Markets (Firestone) SL 8100
11. That Christmas Feeling - MCA 15019
12. Merry Christmas - MCA 15024
13. Two Favorite Stories (The Small One-The Happy Prince) - MCA 15017
14. A Christmas Sing With Bing Around the World - MCA 15018
15. Bing Crosby's Greatest Hits - MCA 3031
16. Der Bingle, Vol. 2 - Spokane 10
17. Kraft Music Hall - January 29, 1942 - Spokane 11
18. Bing in the Thirties - Spokane 12
(The above three can be obtained from Spokane Records, PoO. Box 724, Redmond, Wash. 98052)
19. Where the Blue of the Night Meets the Gold of the Day - Biograph BLP-M-1
20. Distinctively Bing, Vol. 1 and Vol. 2 - Sunbeam P-502 & P-504 - Available from Sunbeam, 13821 Calvert St., Van Nuys, Ca. 91401
21. The Unforgettable Hits of the 40s and 50s - Decca R214291 (2 LP set)
22. Great Movie Music - Saturday Evening Post - Available from GRT Music Dept., C31, 10th and Mulberry, Des Moines, Iowa 50336
23. Echoes of the Thirties - Available for \$19.88 from Nostalgia Book Club, 165 Huguenot St., New Rochelle, N.Y. 10801
24. Judy Garland in Holland, Vol. 3
25. Every Artist Has A Song - 3 LP set - Available for \$6.99 from Publishers Overstock, Dept. 521, 1 Champion Ave., Avenel, N.J. 07131 (Order #956373)

Singles

1. True Love Well Did You Evah - Capitol CL 15953
2. Goodnight Sweetheart Where the Blue of the Night - Decca F13740

Bing Crosby - a legendary performer RCA CPL 12086
It's easy to remember MCA TVS 1005
Shillelaghs and Shamrocks MCA MAP/S 1707
A nostalgic hour of Bing Crosby MCA MAP/S 6328
A tribute to Bing Crosby (2 x 2lp sets - radio material) EMI EMB 10389 & 10390
A musical autobiography of Bing Crosby MCA Coral (5 lps) COPS 62395 *
London Palladium Concert (2 lps) United Artists UA L45717/8
That's what life is all about United Artists US L35588
A Southern Memoir London SAHA 8489
Feels good, feels right United Artists SKLA 5261 (also available on World Record Club as "When I leave the world behind" R/C 04707)
Mr Crosby and Mr Mercer MCA COPS 7721
Pocketful of dreams MCA COPS 3332
That Christmas Feeling COPS 3630
The Bing Crosby Story Vol 1 CBS S2BP 220159
Old Masters (3 LP's) MCA MAPS 5116
Two Favourite Stories MCA COPS 3759
I wish you a merry Xmas (reissue of early 1960's Xmas LP) ST 6899 EMI
A time to be jolly 20th Century L 36487 (reissue of an LP from 1970)
This is Bing Crosby (2 lp's culled from tracks recorded in 1956 and 57) RCA CPL2 7107
Bing sings for children MCA COPS 3114
Songs I wish I'd sung the first time round MCA COPS 4222
Songs everybody knows COPS 4225 MCA
My Golden Favourites COPS 4235 MCA
Holiday in Europe MCA MAPS 1707
Merry Christmas MCA COPS 1011
The best of Bing MCA DXSB 7184
Bing Crosby's greatest hits (a new reissue of mostly re-issued previously old material) MCA MC 3031
Crosby Classics HC 1048 Harmony
High Society World Record Club R/C RC 00557 Also, Capitol SW 750.
Seasons (Bing's last LP) Polydor C 3170478
A couple of song and dance men United Artists
At my time of life United Artists UA L 35889
The Great Country Hits Capitol VMP 10324
A Christmas sing with Bing around the world (reissue of a 1955 LP - taken from a radio show.)

* Musical autobiography set is also available from the world record club on R04708/12

(Editor's Note: In addition to the above, I understand there will be a 2-LP Columbia Special Products issue called "Bing Crosby Remembered," a 6-LP Columbia Special Products issue called "Golden Memories" and two additional as yet untitled Columbia issues. Readers Digest is testing a 9-LP set which will be issued if there is enough interest. The Belgium BIAC LPs listed in the last issue of "Bingang" can be obtained from Rarerecords, P.O. Box 254, Getzville, N.Y. 14068. Frank Murphy can also be contacted for any of the British issues which you require. His address appears on the title page. The LPs listed above which do not include labels or numbers will be reported on more completely in our next issue when we hope to have more information on them.)

Books

The One and Only Bing - by Bob Thomas and the Associated Press - Grosset & Dunlap - \$14.95 hardcover (\$16.95 Canada) \$5.95 softcover (\$6.95 Canada) \$1.95 paperback

The Films of Bing Crosby - by Robert Bookbinder - Citadel Press - \$14.95

The Fabulous Life of Bing Crosby - by George Carpozi Jr. - \$1.95 - Manor Books Inc.

Magazine Tributes

Bing - Text by Joseph L. Koenig - a Dell purse book 0486 - 49¢ - Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1 Dag Hammarskjold Plaza, New York 10017

Bing Crosby Album - Dell 04063 - \$1.25 (UK 75p) - address as above

Bing Crosby - a pictorial tribute - Dell - \$1.25 (UK 75p) - address above

Bing - The Road to Eternity (includes full color poster pullout) - \$1.50 by John Thomas Church - Today's Communication Inc., 600 Third Ave., New York 10016

Bing Crosby - a Manor Movie Superstars collector's issue - Vol. 3 - Winter 1977 - \$1.95 - Manor Books Inc., 432 Park Ave. So., N.Y. 10016

The Bing Crosby Story - A Movieland Tribute - Vol. 1, No. 1 - Lopez Publications, 21 West 26 St., New York 10010 - \$1.50

A Tribute to Bing - 40p - Distributed by Moore Harness Ltd., 31 Corsica St., London N5, England

(Editor's Note: A compilation of magazine articles honoring Bing will appear in the next issue of "Bingang")

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Bing

He did things alone, but the crooner was no loner

Rockford, Illinois
November 21-23, 1977

EDITOR'S NOTE: Shortly before his death, Bing Crosby wrote three articles about himself and his philosophy — eloquent testimony of the kind of man the late singer was. In the first article of the series, he debunks the myth that he was a loner. They are his own words — not a press agent's, as is so often the case with big stars. These articles are being published as a memorial to a man who brought so much joy to millions.

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By BING CROSBY

HOLLYWOOD — A lot of people have a mental picture of me as a guy who never really worked hard at anything in his life. I'd like to correct that little illusion.

I think I've worked hard at a lot of things, but because I liked doing them I guess they came off as easy — it looked as though I was just waltzing through them without a thought in the world.

Doesn't John Wayne do pretty much the same thing? And look at how the Durable Duke is still going strong after some 46 years.

I want to try to level a base canard that has gained some currency late in the press, in a book or two, on TV and in radio interviews.

It is alleged by some careless people that I'm "a loner" — a cod fish without sentiment or convivial instincts. Now I don't suppose there are many people who really care or who are really interested in whether I'm any of these things, or all of them. But I care. A lot.

My description of a loner would be a recluse, an introvert — a man insecure and deeply introspective. Now I really don't think I'm any of these things.

Bing Crosby



The person,
the philosophy

True, I'm not very demonstrative. I don't gush, wring my hands or beat my bosom. The only thing that can really arouse my ire is to miss a two-foot putt when it means the match.

I really think I'm extremely gregarious. Actually, I know more people from more different walks of life and levels of society than anyone I ever heard of except perhaps only Bob Hope — and, of course, he's ubiquitous.

I have played golf, shot, fished and consorted with kings, princes, heads of state, jockeys, seniors, juniors, pros — (both men and women), doctors, lawyers, famous amateurs (male and female), artists, painters, hustlers, drunks, financiers, touts, writers and scientists — every kind of athlete in practically every country in the world and on practically every famous golf course that exists.

I even played golf with some (Chicago hoods in the mid-'30s. Involuntarily, to be sure. And the association was short lived. We just never kept in touch.

Up until recently, I held membership in 15 different golf clubs here and

abroad. I've played in countless tournaments, exhibitions and charity matches. I've shot and fished all over the continental United States, Alaska, Hawaii, Canada, South America, England, Scotland, Ireland, France, Spain, the Bahamas, Iceland, Mexico, and I've made eight safaris into East Africa.

All of this, you may be sure, has enabled me to develop a vast circle of friends and acquaintances. People with whom I correspond and with whom I visit whenever opportunity allows.

I hate name-dropping so I'm not going to drop any names, but I've been associated with racing and baseball (in official and social postures). I've been to every good race track in the United States and Europe. I know personally many trainers, riders and breeders. I've seen every classic and every important race in the last 30 or 40 years. I even built a race track one time.

But I love to walk. I love to walk alone. That's when I do some of my best thinking — or practically all of my thinking.

I have so many friends in show business — old and valued friends — but I have just as many friends who know nothing about show business or any of its aspects. When I finished a picture or a job on TV, I was gone the next day. Golfing, shooting, traveling. Without a thought of or a connection with any part of the entertainment world.

Now maybe some of the people I've worked with might have thought this indicated I didn't care for their company. Not at all. I love them all. Never had a disagreement with anyone in any cast of any picture I ever worked in.

Truly, I had great fun and many laughs with most of them. I can't think of a single film in which we didn't have laughs, gags, ribs going all the time.

I never had a director who I didn't like personally. Some of them I adored. I had a few beefs with some producers over song material once or twice. Nothing serious. Otherwise, it was all just a breeze.

Moral decline in films needs turn-around

EDITOR'S NOTE: Shortly before his death, Bing Crosby wrote three articles about himself — eloquent testimony of the kind of man the late singer was. In today's article, the second of the series, he attacks the current trend in movies and television towards violence and pornography and suggests what the public can do to help stop the trend before it is too late.

By BING CROSBY

HOLLYWOOD — Now that we have disposed, I hope, of the quite trivial matter of my being a "loner," I want to talk about something which is very serious. Even critical.

I was laid up for five or six weeks lately — hospitalized — and of course, I

saw lots and lots of TV.

It became apparent to me that — very slowly and very subtly — writers and producers are working in nudity, permissiveness, irresponsibility, profanity, scenes of semi-explicit sex, provocative dialogue, smutty innuendoes and situations into their shows. Moral responsibility is almost indiscernible.

Now I abhor censorship. Another word I dislike is boycott. But the inability of the former to be useful will surely produce the latter. Already there are little groups all over the country — groups of concerned people who want to do something about this before it's too late.

Let met tell you something. If they all get together and they become a nationwide organization of 15 million or 16

million people and they tell some of the big advertisers on TV, some of the big sponsors, that they will stop buying their products unless they clean up their shows — impact? You bet. Now I don't condone boycott any more than I do censorship, but it could happen.

I don't believe the First Amendment should apply here. A citizen can say or do anything he wants out on the street unless he breaks the law, but he shouldn't be allowed to come into a man's house and fill his TV set with prurient material. It certainly is not of the type of thing that you want your children to see daily. Its effect can't be anything else but harmful.

They see these chic, sophisticated people behaving immorally, salaciously. People living together without the

benefit of marriage must be the thing to do, they think. Must be clever or attractive. Kids, you know, are indelibly impressed by anything they see in a film, done by attractive, famous people.

I happen to believe that the family is the basis for a sound society. A good strong society makes for a good strong community, and you get enough good strong communities and you've got a strong nation.

It's my fervent prayer that responsible people in the business — people of principle — will exert their influence in the effort to eliminate this highly objectionable material.

• • •
WEDNESDAY IN FOCUS: Giving the Public What It Wants

Sentimental? Acutely. When I see three U.S. athletes mount the risers at the Olympic Games to receive the medals and they play our National Anthem, I'm very misty-eyed. Newsreels or TV films of U.S. troops in faraway places fighting, suffering and dying affect me deeply.

It makes me very sad to see people embarrassed or treated shabbily in public.

Honestly, I would have to say that I'm really a softie.

I am a great sports spectator. I've seen Super Bowls, most of the big heavyweight contests, any important boxing contests, track meets. Been to five or six Olympic Games. I guess I've taken it all in. I don't know what else I could see that would be available. All the important tennis matches. And I honestly don't think this sounds very much like a loner.

And what I have just described here is actually only a small part of what I've been up to through the years, in addition to making a few films.

Puzzling over how this negative opinion got around — that I was a loner — I think I might have come up with some of the reasons why.

Since I first achieved any success or stature, I have always traveled more or less alone. When I came to work I drove down in my own car. If I attended a function or a party or went to a football match or baseball game or boxing match or whatever kind of public event, I either went alone or with members of the family or maybe one or two other guys.

I have never had an entourage or a retinue trailing along behind me. Something like this would disturb me — to be always accompanied thus. It attracts attention. I'd worry about them.

Are they being taken care of? Are they set for lunch or dinner? Where are they going to stay? Are they happy?

Would they "yes" me along, or give me honest opinions? I don't really see where it's necessary to have this kind of procession.

I've had the same law firm for 45 years. They look after everything for me. I may lunch with one of the firm partners three or four times a year, or talk things over on the telephone maybe once a week.

It's only natural, I suppose, when people see me drive up alone or walking

alone en route to work or whatever. They must say, "He's a loner." They're accustomed to seeing so many performers with five or six guys trailing along behind in preferred pecking order.

They must think I'm very odd

Only the filmgoers can change industry's course

EDITOR'S NOTE: Shortly before his death, Bing Crosby wrote three articles about himself — eloquent testimony of the kind of man the late singer was. In today's final article, he bemoans the dearth of family films, while films appealing to only small, special-interest audiences abound. They are his own words — not a press agent's, as is so often the case with big stars. These articles are being published as a memorial to a man who brought so much joy to millions.

By BING CROSBY

HOLLYWOOD — I love show business. Every facet of it. And I'm extremely grateful for what it has done for me. I would be nothing without it. But I'm worried now. Pornographic pictures, dirty books and magazines seem to be beyond any kind of control.

Talking to a TV executive recently and voicing my sentiments, he said to me, "We're only depicting life as it is."

But I fear that they are depicting life as it is going to be if they are not diverted. This seems like a very unattractive prospect to me.

There's an old saying in show business, particularly the movies and the legitimate stage, that the film-makers and stage producers give the public just

Bing Crosby



The person,
the philosophy

what the public wants.

It sounds like a logical theory, but it is somewhat misleading.

Take the movies as a prime example. What's actually happening is that Hollywood studios, as well as the foreign film-makers, are turning out pictures that are wanted by only a minority of the potential moviegoing population — a ridiculous situation that could be changed by the film fans if they as-

serted themselves in volume.

With exception of the handful of intensively promoted "blockbusters" such as "Love Story", "The Godfather", "The Exorcist", "The Towering Inferno", "Jaws", "Earthquake", "Star Wars" and the few others that come along each year — sometimes by pure accident — the average motion picture draws less than 15 per cent of the people who are basically movie fans.

This has been going on for so many years that you'd think the producers would be wise to the fallacy — and would learn more about what moviegoers want by studying what they DON'T want and do something about it. But no dice.

Instead, the major studios try to put out a couple of smash hits each season, hoping these will offset the losses on the also-rans, while the small independents mostly focus on what they call "exploration films," and some frankly go in for low-cost X-rated pornography.

The recent general trend to more and more permissiveness — especially in sex and violence — has attracted big attendance to a limited number of films, but alienated millions who used to go to the wholesome movies every week or oftener.

The average motion picture draws less than 15 per cent of the people who are basically movie fans.

Film producers and distributors, taking their cue from the prevailing loose moral trends, have publicized, advertised and exploited their broadly permissive attractions with all-out campaigns — helped by plenty of free assists publicity-wise from the media both nationally and in communities where the controversial films ran into legal difficulties because the authorities regarded them as obscene or too violent. All this publicity helped draw customers.

Wholesome movies — the kind that parents would not hesitate to take their children to see — not only don't enjoy the teaser publicity generated by daringly obscene films, but the producers and distributors most of the time don't

bother to give the "clean" pictures an adequate advance campaign to inform the public about them.

When there's a picture that you'd like to have seen — but missed it because it opened and closed before you even knew about it — you should complain to the theater manager.

In fact, if enough film fans conveyed their views to cinema operators in their communities and the theater men in turn passed the comments along to Hollywood, it could eventually have some influence in bringing you better films.

Stars no longer have a big enough faithful following to assure their box office draw in both good and bad stories. Two film hits in a row can catapult a

newcomer to stardom — and two flops in a row can topple him or her just as fast.

Only a few seasons ago, Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton were considered invincible, so much in demand by producers that they could write their own ticket. Today Robert Redford and Barbra Streisand hold sway. Tomorrow — who knows? All are talented artists — but all are at the mercy of story material.

Many popular personalities of the past are not being seen much on the screen these days, though the fans continue to express high interest in them. The reason is that they can't find acceptable scripts.

I can't imagine Bob Hope or James Stewart appearing in a pornographic picture. Nor the late Jack Benny.

One ray of hope that I see on the horizon is the increasing interest in nostalgia, both on the screen and on the Broadway stage.

There was a lot of wonderful creativity in many of the old days — note that I didn't say "good" old days — even in the Depression era of the 1930s.

There are always better days ahead if we just make the most of them — and that's a thought I'd like to leave with the new generation.

EDITORIAL EPILOGUE

I wish all of you could have seen the mountain of clippings and letters which descended upon me as a result of my request for material for Bing's memorial journal. I was overwhelmed and enormously grateful for your response, and it has been a difficult process trying to decide what to do. It was obviously hopeless that I could condense the enormous range of excellent articles and letters into manageable size for a journal of this length in the meagre amount of time available to work on it. I finally concluded that I would pick only representative material in an attempt to capture the essence of those trying days in October when a part of all of us died on a golf course in Spain and the rest of the world paused momentarily to express its own shock and sorrow.

Future journals will include more of the material you sent and perhaps, if there is enough interest, I will compile a 1978 directory of members which will be made available in a separate supplement. Original articles will be needed more than ever so please don't hesitate to let me know your ideas. The material received suggests that a local approach might be interesting for an historical series--Bing in Hawaii, Canada, etc. I will endeavor to sort and return articles that you specifically asked to be returned, so please remind me (identifying newspapers) if you don't hear from me. I tried to log everything in when it first started arriving, but it soon became apparent that there wouldn't be any journal at all if I tried to catalog everything first. Therefore, at the present time, the clipping situation is still chaotic.

The expense of this issue of "Bingang" will preclude the possibility of a regular March issue. We hope to do an interim newsletter and will be back in September with our regular journal.

There certainly isn't any lack of worthwhile tasks facing us as collectors. A complete list of record reissues--world-wide--and a complete list of tribute books and magazines is top priority. Another area needing attention is the radio & TV material. It would be helpful if those of you who have taped tributes would document the program and station & submit it to me. Perhaps one of you would volunteer to compile a composite list. We will continue work on the TV-ography with the hope of finishing it this year. For those of you who own videocassette recorders, I would appreciate receiving details on your model of machine and your collection. I will compile a list and send a newsletter to those owning a videocassette recorder if you will identify yourselves to me.

And what now of the Bing Crosby story? Bob Hope said "The world is a little shabbier without him," and I know I speak for everyone in Club Crosby when I say that our world will never be the same again.

John Salisbury writes a provocative article in this journal entitled "Forever Is A Long, Long Time" in which he poses the question of whether Bing will be remembered. I recall Bing being interviewed on a local San Francisco TV station just before his Concord concert. He closed with a rather plaintive sentence, "I would like to be remembered." Six simple words, and it struck me at the time as a typical Crosby understatement of what must have been a strong sentiment on his part.

I would like to think that the reply is a resounding yes but, if we could pinpoint our major concern as collectors at this juncture, I'm sure it would be the issue of remembrance. It is not a simple issue. True, radio is dominated by the promoters and enthusiasts of rock. KMPX in San Francisco has had a continuing battle to try to save the station for other kinds of music, and I'm sure the situation exists in many other areas as well. If the people who want to preserve the music they love aren't willing to fight for the right to hear something other than rock on the radio stations, who will? Most of us have the music we want to listen to available at home and don't need radio but, if we are interested in preserving Bing's legacy, we should be doing more to see that future generations have a choice in their music.

Television, too, should be utilized more effectively for this purpose. Why must we be saturated with Donny & Marie Osmond, Sonny & Cher, etc., when many of us would enjoy a balance by seeing some of the greats of the past as well? Jack Haley Jr. took a chance on it with "That's Entertainment" for the movie audiences and came out a winner - old & young flocked to see it and the sequel.

Musical styles change, but the best of every era has thus far managed to be carried over into succeeding eras. Jolson, Crosby, Sinatra, Elvis, the collective Beatles - will there be other giants in the running before the close of the 20th century? Crosby's career encompassed the recording studio, radio, motion pictures, TV and, thanks to these unforgettable last few years, the concert hall as well. Surely the flexibility and durability of his talent would qualify Bing as the legend par excellence of anyone who has entertained us since the advent of the phonograph and the motion picture camera. But it wasn't just the talent and the media personality of the man. It was the character of the private man that set him apart. As Vern Wesley Taylor expressed it in the eulogy at the beginning of this journal, perhaps that was the best part - the part that made the rest possible.

The "Melody Maker" in an article reprinted in this journal called Bing "the king of the age of romance." It was essentially a putdown of the age that produced Bing, although those who put down the era can't seem to ever bring themselves to put down Bing himself. You just can't dismiss a legend of that magnitude.

I would like to think the "Melody Maker" represents only one viewpoint in a world that still needs public heroes the likes of the giant eulogized in this journal. Speaking for all romantics past, present and future who loved the man, his music, and the era he represented:

Yes, Bing, you will be remembered. "Only Forever."

Pat Sullivan
President, Club Crosby
Chico, California
January 1, 1978